The Cultural Zionism of Zeev Jawitz

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A Harmony of Judaism and Zionism: Modern Jewish Culture through the Lens of Zeev Jawitz

One of the final days of the First World War found Zionist author and historian Zeev Jawitz (1847–1924)[[1]](#footnote-1) residing in England, pen in hand, responding to a youthful associate who sought his advice before migrating to Palestine. Jawitz was pleased by the material development of the Jewish community in the Land of Israel. However, he felt burdened by the cultural reality which prevailed in the New Yishuv and among many members of the Zionist movement who, influenced by the cultural Zionism of Achad Ha’am and his circle, had distanced themselves from the traditional vision of Judaism as Jawitz understood it:

And lo, there comes from Russia a congregation of persons, in their mouths the law of *Nihilismus*, the god of nothingness, on whose altar they offered up in entirety the law of Moses in the fire ignited by Wellhausen and his band of German despoilers, enemies of Israel. They have forever removed the splendor from the sucklings of my people. Other than the Hebrew prattle in which they glory, they aspire to nothing. Of our holy scriptures, as written and transmitted, there is not a trace, let alone of the Talmud, on which the entire House of Israel is constructed. Even our beautiful, delicate language, they have torn asunder, leaving naught of it whole. In this spirit they water the children and adolescents in their schools. Their motto regarding matters of religion is “a new God instead of an old God now aged.” This is their platform. Meanwhile our platform is clearly inscribed in Isaiah 2:2–4.[[2]](#footnote-2)

On the eve of Purim 1889, Achad Ha’am (pseudonym of Asher Ginsberg, 1856–1927) published an article in the journal *Hamelitz*, titled ‘לא זה הדרך’ (‘This is Not the Way’). This article called for national-cultural activity to be prioritized over practical settlement activity, and for the Zionist cause to be advanced “neither with treasure nor with might, but with the spirit.”[[3]](#footnote-3) With the publication of this piece, Achad Ha’am effectively birthed cultural Zionism, a movement that the author would lead for many years. Achad Ha’am doubted that there was any possibility of success for the efforts of the Chovevei Tziyyon, and his skepticism extended later to the political and diplomatic activity of the Zionist movement headed by Herzl. Achad Ha’am believed that what he described as the problem of Judaism, namely, assimilation and loss of Jewish identity, was both a weightier and a more urgent matter than the problem of the Jews, or anti-Semitism. In his view, so long as Jewish minds had not yet been readied, and so long as there was no national culture to nourish the national identity of the Jewish masses, popular support for a Jewish national movement was an impossibility. He therefore championed the creation of a cultural center in the Land of Israel, which would take the lead in creating a new and comprehensive national culture.[[4]](#footnote-5) The basic elements of this culture, according to Achad Ha’am, would be “the Land of Israel and its settlement, the language of our ancestors and its literature, the memory and history of our ancestors, the foundational customs of our ancestors, and their national culture across the generations.”[[5]](#footnote-6) In keeping with his vision, Achad Ha’am conceived of Jewish schools as playing a key role in inculcating the new culture in children. He was the unofficial leader of the Sons of Moses, a society founded for the purpose of realizing this vision. After the demise of that group, he remained an intellectual authority and counselor to many young people who had adopted his orientation and devoted themselves to the renewed Hebrew culture that he advocated. At the same time, Achad Ha’am did not cease his own involvement in various cultural projects.[[6]](#footnote-7) The ideas of a ‘cultural Zionism,’ a ‘cultural center’ in the Land of Israel, and a Jewish ‘national culture’ came to be associated indelibly with Achad Ha’am’s name. These concepts stood in opposition to the ideas and ideals of rival groups within the Zionist movement, especially political Zionism and religious Zionism. Religious Jews had bitterly opposed Achad Ha’am as early as the 1894 dispute over the Hebrew school in Jaffa, and this hostility intensified after the cultural debate that erupted in the Zionist movement in 1902. The religious-Zionist Mizrachi party, which was established in the dispute’s aftermath, sought to limit the Zionist movement to the religiously neutral pursuits of diplomacy and settlement, while curbing the efforts of the Democratic Faction to give the kind of cultural activities advocated by Achad Ha’am a place on the agenda of the movement.[[7]](#footnote-8)

There is a certain irony in the fact that the modern Hebrew term for *culture* (תרבות) was proposed in its current sense by Zeev Jawitz, a detractor of Achad Ha’am and one of the founders of the Mizrachi. Even as Achad Ha’am rose to prominence in the Jewish national movement, Jawitz extended efforts both highly similar and profoundly different from those of his opponent to give new life to the culture of the Jewish nation by fostering love of the Land of Israel, developing the Hebrew language, expanding Hebrew literary production, and investigating Jewish history. Jawitz understood that his time was one of transition from a diasporic mode of living to a different form of life in the national homeland which would present both complex problems and rare opportunities. He aspired to adapt Orthodoxy to the new world unfolding in Palestine, in part by fusing it with reawakened Jewish nationalism. Jawitz was active in all areas of culture, from history to language, literature to pedagogy, tailoring each to the teachings of Orthodoxy. He understood that a nation returning to its homeland would need a culture whose breadth and depth greatly exceeded the confines of halakhah. As such, Jawitz attempted to produce a traditional account of the past; literature that was positive rather than subversive; and a new program of religious education, all intended to satisfy these cultural needs without breaking with the past. He was a pioneer in the mission to create a new Hebrew culture based on tradition, education, and nationalism, but the meteoric rise and powerful cultural leadership of Achad Ha’am largely eclipsed his accomplishments. In this article, I will retrace the cultural activities of Zeev Jawitz and examine his fascinating, hidden relationship with Achad Ha’am.

Early Literary Activity

Zeev Jawitz was born in 1847 in Kolno, a town in northeastern Poland. His father, a wealthy merchant, was known as a strident mitnaged and fervently Orthodox Jew. In 1860, the family moved to Łomża, then to Warsaw five years later. The elder Jawitz provided his son with an education in the Tanakh and Hebrew language, and hired private tutors to teach him European languages, including French, Polish, and German. When not occupied with formal studies, Zeev avidly consumed works of geography, history, and the Haskalah, and was particularly influenced by the writings of Josephus and the stories of Abraham Mapu. He married at eighteen. Widowed while still young, he subsequently married Yechiel Mikhel Pines’s sister, Golda.[[8]](#footnote-9)

Love letters sent to Golda in 1870, while the couple was engaged, offer us a window into Jawitz’s worldview and the values on which he intended to build their mutual home. In these letters, Jawitz emphasizes the value of bringing together Torah and secular learning while giving pride of place to the former, and makes clear that he sees himself as a Jewish nationalist powerfully attached to the national trappings of Judaism. He stresses the superiority of Hebrew over European languages, establishing it as the language of their correspondence. Jawitz sees himself as a boulder unmoved from his faith and values by beleaguering gale winds, as “that Hebrew true to his God and his nation, to his holy religion, to the ancient land of his forefathers, and to his sacred tongue; […] that young one whom the plagues of this generation have not yet done (and will not do) any harm, whom cold materialism and indifferentism do not allure, for the sun melts them, and like crusts of ice they shatter.”[[9]](#footnote-10) Jawitz’s self-esteem was considerable. He sensed that he was different from many of his contemporaries who had dabbled in secular knowledge only to find themselves leaving tradition, or at least saddled with feelings of inferiority when confronted by the culture of Europe. However, Jawitz did not spend his early professional life as an author. Immediately after marrying Golda, he began work in publishing. When earnings from that profession proved unsatisfactory, he moved to the rug trade. After failing to succeed in that field, he became a producer of pen barrels, but in this area, too, he was unsuccessful.

On the advice of his brother-in-law Yechiel Michael Pines and with the encouragement of his wife, Jawitz then ended his business career and gave free rein to his literary inclinations. Despite his religious fervency and the influence of Pines, once Jawitz had joined the world of writers, he sought out the companionship of Eastern European maskilim. Early on, he pursued a relationship with the famed Hebrew poet Yehudah Leib Gordon (1830–92), despite the dogged campaign waged by the latter against the rabbinic establishment. Still, the rampant secularization in the Pale of Settlement greatly worried Jawitz, who saw himself as taking the middle way between conservatives and defectors.[[10]](#footnote-11) Jawitz sent his articles to Gordon, in order to obtain the opinion of an influential and well-known literary luminary. This is attested to in a letter from Gordon to Jawitz, found in the archive of the latter. In the letter, Gordon expresses great interest in the work and background of his younger colleague:

I do perceive things to come in your future, and I perceive in you a much -blessed portent for Israel, and I would therefore hold dear your love and seek your intimacy, and if you should again address me, tell me, please, how old you are, where you were born, where you came of age among the wise, and how it is that a wholesome spirit of the Lord found and rested upon you in its very perfection as it is today.[[11]](#footnote-12)

Jawitz also developed ties with Peretz Smolenskin (1842–85), the secular nationalist editor of *Hashachar*,[[12]](#footnote-13) and it was in that periodical that Jawitz published his earliest articles. Ultimately, though, he came to be closest to moderate, traditional maskilim of the Russian Empire, such as Albert Harkavy (1835–1919), Avraham S. Friedberg (1838–1902), Samuel Joseph Fünn (1818–91), and especially Shaul Pinchas Rabinowitz, the last of whom then resided in Warsaw and mentored Jawitz during the earliest stages of his literary career.

By the time Jawitz had joined the conversations of the maskilim, Jewish nationalism had supplanted enlightenment and modernity as the focus of Eastern European maskilic discourse,[[13]](#footnote-14) and the writing of the new entrant was very much in keeping with this new trend. The city of Warsaw, which had not previously been a center of maskilic literature on par with Vilnius and Odessa,[[14]](#footnote-15) had begun rising in importance in the world of Hebrew journalism and literature in Czarist Russia. It was in the 1880s that *Hatzefira*, published in that city, became the preeminent Jewish newspaper in Czarist Russia, and editor Selig Slonimski was joined in Warsaw by distinguished Hebrew journalists and writers such as Nahum Sokolow, Rabinowitz, and Avraham S. Friedberg. The centrality of the city as a literary hub crystalized in the ensuing decade, with the arrival of David Frischmann, Isaac Loeb Perez, and Ben Avigdor. Jawitz thus commenced his literary career just as Warsaw began its rapid rise in the world of Hebrew literature, becoming home to prominent Hebrew publishing houses and printing facilities.

In his first articles published in Smolenskin’s *Hashachar*, the earliest of which appeared in 5642 [1881/1882], Jawitz argued that the Jewish people fundamentally differed from other nations and for this reason could not integrate among them, “because just as iron and clay cannot become a single solid mass, so we and they cannot become a single nation, for which reason they always have been unready to absorb us and quick to eject.”[[15]](#footnote-16) Emancipation, he averred, was no solution, and the new anti-Semitism only proved the fundamental differentness of the Jews. The only solution was to return to the Land of Israel.

In another article published that year, this time in *Hamaggid* under the pseudonym Jacob (יעקב), Jawitz described renewed settlement of the Land of Israel as a solution for the contemporary spiritual ills of Jewry. He argued that the Haskalah, an essentially positive development, was ushering the peoples of Europe toward secularism, and that the combination of emancipation and resultant socio-economic realities were placing pressure on Jews to change their way of life, as clearly demonstrated by violation of the dietary laws and the Sabbath. A viable synthesis of enlightenment and tradition, according to Jawitz, could be created only in the Land of Israel. Only there could the Jews live according to their authentic spirit and original culture, without external coercion. Jawitz would refine and develop this argument in the years that followed:

There shall they establish their schools and their halls of study according to the spirit of the people of Israel. We shall maintain the conventions practiced in Europe, not due to their high birth, but because they are truly good. However, our wholesome Torah no longer will be set aside on account of their empty palaver, for we possess an abundant inheritance from our father’s home and have no need to go knocking upon the doors of those ancient Greeks and Romans who consume the choicest time of the pupils at school. […] Not for us are the laws of the Romans, for aside from the sanctity of the laws of our Torah and Talmud, are they not superior in their rectitude and righteousness to the statutes of the Romans? Why then ought we hover at the threshing floors of aliens to appeal for chaff when our silos are full of grain and bread? Thus is it clear that just as in Europe, it is the Greek and the Roman flavor that is the spirit ruling all, thus shall the Torah of the Lord be enthroned when God grants us safe settlement in the land of our forefathers. Instead of the lyre of Orpheus, we shall have the lyre of David, and instead of the *Corpus Juris*, *Choshen Mishpat* and *Even Ha’ezer* shall judge among us, between man and wife and between a person and his friend, between us and ourselves, and with this the Torah and Talmud shall come to be esteemed sevenfold by the entire nation complete.[[16]](#footnote-17)

This article appears to be the first in which Jawitz focused on the intellectual and cultural aspects of national rebirth and the return to Zion, antedating Achad Ha’am by several years. Here Jawitz first discusses, if briefly, his view of the religious character of the Jewish commonwealth to rise in the Land of Israel.

In an 1884 article entitled “לברית עם לאור גויים,” Jawitz discussed the Jewish experience of emancipation and the ideology developed by Jews seeking to integrate. Liberal Judaism in Germany had identified the destiny of Judaism with dissemination of the universal values of reason and ethics throughout the world, rather than practical religious ritual. It accordingly replaced the vision of a messianic redemption, consisting chiefly of a return to Zion and reconstitution there of the Jewish monarchy, with a vision of the End of Days in which the Jews enjoyed equal rights, and enlightenment and the brotherhood of nations reigned in Europe.[[17]](#footnote-18) Jawitz took issue with the idea of destiny posited by the German reformers. He argued that it was nothing but a fraud and a fig leaf for their abandonment of the vision of a return to Zion in favor of national and cultural assimilation. As far as he was concerned, Jewish destiny could be fulfilled only in the Land of Israel:

When Israel dwells on its land, unaccompanied by aliens, then it truly can be an exemplar to the nations. Then, when it arranges the pronouncements of its government in accordance with the Torah, according law and justice to the stranger sojourning in its midst, all the nations of the earth shall see that the Torah of kindness that the Lord gave His people is lofty and exalted, and Israel a single people in truth and righteousness. Yet if a man of Israel carries on his lips the sublime verse “a single statute and a single law [shall there be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you]” at a time when we ask, like a pauper at the door, to be accorded a part of the rights of the nations in whose midst we reside, who will take notice of us, inasmuch as we have a vested interest in the matter?[[18]](#footnote-19)

Whenever Jews in exile sought justice, according to Jawitz, they would be suspected of having an ulterior motive. Only once reinstalled in their sovereign land would they be in a position to create a model society. Similar criticism of universal messianism appeared six years later in “עבדות בתוך חירות,” an article in which Achad Ha’am contended that the self-denial of Western Jews and their subjugation to emancipation were responsible for the rise of that tenet.[[19]](#footnote-20)

Over the years, articles by Jawitz in Hebrew newspapers extended to the fields of philosophy, Jewish history, and fine literature.

Reworked Rabbinic Legend

The first book by Jawitz, שיחות מני קדם, appeared in 5647 (1886/1887). Distributed as a gift to readers of *Keneset Yisra’el*, a periodical edited by Shaul Pinchas Rabinowitz, the work contained nineteen talmudic legends in a reworked Hebrew translation. Jawitz was the first individual to publish an anthology of reworked rabbinic lore, preceding Bialik and Rawnitzki (ספר האגדה), Berdyczewski (ממקור ישראל), and others. Until his time, maskilim had been wary of the irrational dimension of talmudic legend and generally declined contact with the genre; when they acknowledged it, they did so with the maskilic mission of separating out the rational and ethical elements of the text from its mystical components. Meanwhile, the Orthodox, especially the scholars among them, downplayed the importance of legend relative to halakhic sections of the Talmud. Jawitz, however, was only too happy to work with aggadah, and in doing so legitimated it both as worthwhile religious literature and also as self-sufficient, fantastically inclined aesthetic literature independent of its original, talmudic context.[[20]](#footnote-21)

As the foreword to his book, Jawitz composed an essay on the essence of Jewish and gentile legend. According to him, Jewish legend is an ongoing intellectual literary project of the Jewish people composed in the unifying spirit of Scripture, and its influence has been felt in the philosophical, mystical, and liturgical works of Jewish scholars since time immemorial. Aggadah, he explains, has educational, ethical, and psychological functions:

Like a compassionate mother who can both delight the fruit of her womb as she naps and chastise him with the rod of her mouth, so can legend, the faithful sustainer, arrange her words and poise her ways with young Israel, whom she rears in her bosom. When he is dispirited, she gladdens him with the joy of her delights, expressing to him traditions from long ago. To find a moment’s retreat for his soul, depressed and subjugated in the exile, she raises him aloft atop the wings of the wind, causes him to ride lofty heights, conceals him in utmost depths, hastens him to refuge in the expanses of the kingdoms of dream and fancy, delivers him to the far reaches of the inception of peoples and the beginnings of the earth, and when her pupil Israel turns off the path, she turns his ear to hear rebuke, reminds him of the deeds of the forefathers, fervently arrays before his eyes the evil things that came upon him when he strayed from the good and straight path.[[21]](#footnote-22)

Within aggadah, Jawitz identifies three subgenres. The first, which he designates *katvut* (“writing”), consists of brief aphorisms, while the second and third, dubbed *shemu’ot* (“traditions”) and *sichot* (“discourses”), are defined as types of “*haggadot*.” The category of traditions is defined as one of historical stories told not to document past events, but to imprint them in the national consciousness: “We are to seek in the *shemu’ot* not the reality of the event, but the impression that the event made on the soul of the nation, whose feelings are greater than its knowledge.”[[22]](#footnote-23) *Sichot* are folk stories that give expression to the authentic values and aspirations of the people. In practice, only the second and the third subgenres are represented in the book. Jawitz establishes a parallel between the collection of folklore assembled by the brothers Grimm and those legends contained in the Talmud, which he views as a national possession of the highest order. He laments the fact that Jews scorn those legends and their redactors even as the Germans acknowledge an endless debt of gratitude to the Grimm brothers for their work.

Among the goals that Jawitz set for himself was to strengthen the national consciousness of the Jewish people and their love for the Land of Israel. Most of the legends included in the anthology are set in the Land of Israel. Even in those that transpire elsewhere, such as the story of Nachum of Gimzo, the protagonist hails from the Land of Israel and has been sent by its inhabitants on a mission to the seat of power in Greece or Rome. The historical periods in which the stories take place range from the time of the Patriarchs to those of David and Solomon and the era of the Second Temple and the Mishnah. This is what Yaffah Berlovitz defines as the Time of the Land of Israel: the period stretching from the Patriarchal Age to the completion of the Mishnah, in which the people of Israel lived in the Land of Israel, except when exiled to Egypt and later Babylonia.[[23]](#footnote-24) A second goal of the work is to emphasize the spiritual and ethical superiority of the Torah and Jewish scholars over foreign cultures. Many of the legends implicitly portray clashes of ideology between Judaism and the beliefs and views of the Greeks or Romans, and several include explicit debates between Jewish and gentile scholars.[[24]](#footnote-25) In a September 1886 letter to Michel Erlanger that preceded the publication of the book by some months, Jawitz revealed yet another aim of the anthology: “to enrich and entertain schoolchildren during those times when they are not occupied in the schoolhouse, and my brothers the simple farmers on Sabbaths and festival days, and to impart to them fear of the Lord, affection for things sacred, love for their people and their land, and love of work and assiduity.”[[25]](#footnote-26)

A novelty at the time, this cultural and national commentary on rabbinic legend exercised considerable influence on the way in which Bialik conceived of that corpus and on ספר האגדה, the opus he produced together with Rawnitzki that stemmed from that conception. Bialik and Rawnitzki belonged to the school of Zionism founded by Achad Ha’am, and their work was deeply influenced by his thinking. They strove to recanonize the mainly literary-historical sources of Hebrew culture, and ספר האגדה, which reflects the myths and national values shaped by the authors of aggadic literature, was a critical part of the fruits of their labor.[[26]](#footnote-27) Unlike them, Jawitz never presumed to create a new national literary canon, but instead worked to demonstrate the hidden potential of the genre.

Educational Pursuits in the Land of Israel

In 5646 (1885/1886), Jawitz reached a decision to migrate to the Land of Israel and began the necessary preparations. His expectations were great, and his plans bespoke a horizon of not a few years. He saw himself restoring authentic Hebrew culture to the Land of Israel after many long years of exile, as he wrote in a friendly letter to scholar Albert Harkavy:

This creed, that of the greatness of our homeland and the glory of our Torah, is the absolute treasure that is hidden away for the Yishuv, and no man yet has discovered this treasure. All my days I have thirsted, wondering when I would reach this point, when I, insufficient as I am, would be able to make my meager contribution to cultivate Hebrew culture pure and unadulterated by all the dross of Europe but arranged in the European manner, among those settling the estates of the Chovevei Tziyyon, settlers I see as a foundation stone from which the nation will be established when the Lord returns the captivity of His people.[[27]](#footnote-28)

Explicit in these lines is the prominent role that Jawitz planned for himself as the rejuvenator of authentic Hebrew culture in a renewed Jewish country, an end that he intended to accomplish, inter alia, by carefully winnowing the cultural influence of Europe, discarding the chaff to arrive at the desired product. He identifies the Chovevei Tziyyon, who had realized the Zionist idea by settling in the Land of Israel, as a vehicle for this cultural renaissance. From this point onward, this sense of destiny accompanied Jawitz throughout his life.

In the spring of 1887, he moved with his family to the Land of Israel, where they settled in Yehud, near Petach Tikvah. His first pursuit after arriving was in the field of education. At the time, educational institutions in the new agricultural settlements were little more sophisticated than the traditional cheder, augmented by Hebrew and French studies but lacking a formal curriculum.[[28]](#footnote-29) Jawitz, in search of livelihood, wrote to Baron Edmond de Rothschild and asked to be installed as an educator or superintendent of schools in one of the moshavot, detailing his educational doctrine and describing a comprehensive new curriculum that would suit the novel reality of observant Jews engaged in the agricultural development of the Land of Israel. Jawitz later published his plan in German in an 1888 issue of *Jüdische Presse*, and subsequently in Hebrew in 1891 bearing the title “על דבר החינוך לילדי האיכרים בארץ ישראל” in *Ha’aretz*, a journal published in Jerusalem under his editorship. In offering his highly innovative plan, which demonstrated a deep understanding of the psyche of the rural Jews of the Yishuv and the many needs of the settlements of the First Aliyah[[29]](#footnote-30) yet was informed by no prior curriculum of the sort, Jawitz pioneered the construction of a national-religious curricula for the children of the New Yishuv.

Jawitz was opposed to transplanting the exilic model of Jewish education to the Land of Israel, arguing that for known reasons, it was “limited to the sphere of knowledge and ethics, not the field of activity and utility.”[[30]](#footnote-31) In other words, due to the structure of Jewish professions in Europe, which had omitted agriculture and manufacturing, Jewish education there had been strictly academic, with no vocational component, but in the Land of Israel, Jawitz argued, at a time of national renaissance, there was need for vocational education, and especially for agronomy, “that favorable gift that is the possession of every nation and language.” Jawitz accepted the theory, current in maskilic circles, that overconcentration in commerce posed an ethical threat to Jews,[[31]](#footnote-32) but he believed that the proposed solution for returning to productive labor, particularly agriculture, has relevance only in the Land of Israel: “Our nation can be cured of this malignant leprosy, the plague of chaos, only in that place where God will redeem Israel from all its troubles, in the holy land that the Lord swore to its forefathers to give to it.”[[32]](#footnote-33) The vocational part of education, according to Jawitz, had to include agriculture, crafts, and physical education.

Jawitz also advocated adjusting the theoretical curriculum to include maskilic and nationalistic values alongside those of traditional Judaism. Foremost would be study of the Torah: “The Torah of God and performance of the commandments must be the mainstay and purpose of the education of the children of our nation.”[[33]](#footnote-34) Another area of academic study recommended by Jawitz, listed under the rubric “Love of the Nation and the Land,” included Hebrew, Jewish and general history, and geography of the Land of Israel, all of which Jawitz believed would enhance students’ national consciousness, which he described as “the genesis of the settlement of Israel in its land.”[[34]](#footnote-35) Fifteen years later, Jawitz wrote that the function of the educator would be “slowly to cultivate the heart of the pupil, to pour of his spirit into him, and to make the spirit of the nation a spirit of life in his nostrils to bestir him all the days of his life.”[[35]](#footnote-36) He thus proposed reinstituting holidays celebrated by Jews in the past to mark historical occurrences of national import, such as “Peace Day,” on Av 15; Lag Ba’omer, commemorating “one victory won by the armies of Rabbi Akiva and Bar Kokheva against the legions of Rome”; Chanukka, “in memory of the Hasmoneans who ventured forth: Mattathias, Judah, and the warriors”; and Shevat 15 (Tu Bishvat), the new year of trees. Jawitz had celebrated Av 15 even in his youth in Warsaw. One of the letters that he sent to Golda during their engagement begins, “Indeed, tomorrow is a festival: a festival for the Lord to rebuild Shiloh as our people dwells in its holy land,” then proceeds to urge her to enumerate her virtues as did the young Israelite women of old as they addressed their suitors: “Young man, raise now your eyes and see what you will select […].”[[36]](#footnote-37) The reinstitution of these holidays was to be not only a pedagogical device, but also a key element in the rejuvenation of authentic Hebrew culture. The proposed curriculum also included character development, specifying such virtues as “the glory of labor” and “contempt of superfluity (luxury),” and the need to give attention to student discipline.

The proposal by Jawitz was in general agreement with nationalistically inclined Jewish thinkers and educators of the time, such as Eliezer Ben Yehuda, Yehudah Grasowsky, and David Idelovitch, the last two followers of Achad Ha’am, although for Jawitz religious education was most important.[[37]](#footnote-38)

Jawitz ultimately was hired as the rabbi and principal of the school in Zikhron Ya’akov. While there, he decided to add Jewish history to the curriculum and consequently found it necessary to write a book for the purpose, thus becoming the first individual to author a nationalistic Jewish history textbook in Hebrew. He published the work, which he titled דברי הימים לעם בני ישראל מיום היותו עד יסוד הישוב החדש בארץ ישראל, in Jerusalem in 1889/1890. Its eighty pages give a concise summary of Jewish history, referring to the history of other nations only when necessary to provide context for the Jewish experience. Jawitz later explained that he had limited the length of the book for pedagogical reasons, “so the child would get a complete picture of the entire history, from beginning to end, as quickly as possible.”[[38]](#footnote-39) For Jawitz, an appreciation of the big picture was critical for developing a basic understanding of Jewish history. For the studious pupil, though, the book is a vital portal to the continued study of Jewish history. The writing is consummately Orthodox, describing Jewish scholars in every era as righteous and brilliant while sparing them from any criticism. Though תולדות ישראל, a later work by Jawitz, would include certain critiques of rabbinic figures, such as negative comments regarding Maimonides’ *Moreh Nevukhim*, these are absent in the earlier volume because they are not in keeping with its educational goal, though they are relevant to the later, scholarly contribution: “I will say plainly that I created it not only for its own sake, but also to be a dependable device to inspire Israel to love all its treasures and sanctities.”[[39]](#footnote-40) In a letter sent in early 1890 to author Avraham S. Friedberg, Jawitz adds of the book that “its heart is quite wholesome and nothing evil found on its lips, and it reveres God and king, and it does not curse God, or even gods unsacred.”[[40]](#footnote-41)

The textbook earned a withering critique from Eliezer Ben Yehuda. Taking issue with its Orthodoxy and uncriticality of Scripture, he asserted that the volume “arouses loathing in the heart of the enlightened individual” and dismissed it as nothing more than “a philosophical condensation of the hysteria of the Holy Scriptures.”[[41]](#footnote-42) His criticism was not without basis: the work stands out for its conspicuous Orthodoxy when compared to later nationalistic Hebrew textbooks. In 1891, employing the service of a different printer in Jerusalem, Ben Yehuda published his own textbook of Jewish history, which he named קיצור דברי הימים לבני ישראל בשבתם על אדמתם.[[42]](#footnote-43) Whereas Jawitz viewed the Torah as the source of love for the Hebrew language, Jewish history, and the Land of Israel, Ben Yehuda did not seek to make religion dear to his readers. Instead, he sought to extirpate from children’s minds the notion “that never was Israel youthful, never did it live as a political nation, never did it cherish sovereignty, never did it fight for its sovereignty, and that from the day it came into being until today its world contained naught but the four walls of halakhah.”[[43]](#footnote-44) Ben Yehuda accordingly limited his text to the period from Creation until the Bar Kokheva Revolt. Meanwhile, though the political independence of the Biblical Era merited it 120 pages of discussion by Ben Yehuda, Jawitz covered the entire period in no more than fourteen pages, because he relied on his readers to apprise themselves of that time by studying Scripture and saw no need to teach his young students anything about that age that was not contained in the Tanakh. By the same token, while Jawitz includes religious scholars and their work in his narrative, Ben Yehuda limits himself to the endeavors of political and military leaders.[[44]](#footnote-45) Ben Yehuda ends his book with a coda to the failure of the Bar Kokheva Revolt: “From this time, the Jews ceased to live as a political nation … and from then until the present, over the course of 1,824 years, the Jews wander in exile from one people to another, one kingdom to another,” discounting the period of diasporic existence as one of ignominy.[[45]](#footnote-46) Jawitz, conversely, describes the years after the destruction of the Temple as an important era of religious productivity that fortified “the soul of the nation” and its spirit and enabled it to survive the long ensuing exile.[[46]](#footnote-47)

Hebrew Literature

In the summer of 1890, Jawitz was dismissed from his positions by Rothschild’s representative in the Land of Israel and compelled to move from Zikhron Ya’akov to Jerusalem, where he dedicated the next seven years to cultural and literary production. The literary journals that he prepared and published during this time include *Ha’aretz* (4 vol., Jerusalem, 1889/1890–90/91), *Miyerushalayim* (2 vol., Warsaw, 1891–92), *Peri Ha’aretz* (2 vol, Warsaw, 1892[–93], *Ge’on Ha’aretz* (2 vol., Warsaw, 1892/1893–94), and *Mitziyyon* (Warsaw, 1894/1895), which he assigned this variety of names because he lacked a license to publish a periodical. *Chavatzelet* and *Hatzevi*, newspapers that served Jerusalem at the time, were mainly concerned with newsworthy developments in the world, particularly the Jewish diaspora. Their coverage of the Yishuv was sparse, and Jawitz often was displeased by both the extensive criticism of the New Yishuv printed in *Chavatzelet* and the excessive favor shown by *Hatzevi* for the baron’s bureaucrats. Jawitz wanted to create a different publication: not a newspaper to instantly gratify curious readers eager to learn about current events, but a periodical with an educational and cultural flavor, and even an unannounced propagandistic agenda.

The goal of the journals, as described by Jawitz in his introduction to the first volume of *Ha’aretz*, was to tell the Jews of the Diaspora the story of the burgeoning Yishuv and to familiarize the Jews of the Yishuv with work by Jews in the Diaspora and non-Jewish scholars. Jawitz saw his journals as an alternative to those of the Haskalah and the Reform Movement, which he felt were ultimately influenced by non-Jewish culture, “a spirit that did not emerge from among us,” while he considered his own journals to represent an authentic Jewish culture that could develop untouched only in the Land of Israel, “the place that enables Israel to turn its eyes away from the outside and draw its heart deeply inward.”[[47]](#footnote-48)

These journals were the first in which Jawitz published his stories about the Land of Israel, which earned him recognition as the greatest writer of the First Aliyah. His literary creations from this period depict vistas of the Holy Land containing rich descriptions of both natural landscapes and the individuals who inhabit them. Though conflicted, these characters are not plagued by the universal dilemmas that are the stock-in-trade of nineteenth-century European novels, such as the question of sinful enrichment and ethical poverty, or passion and faithfulness. Instead, they are troubled mainly by the need to choose between actualizing their love for the Land of Israel and continuing their previous lives in the Diaspora,[[48]](#footnote-49) a challenge that permits Jawitz to explore such dilemmas as agriculture and commerce, and nature and artifice. These trials are in most cases set at special times in the Jewish calendar, such as Passover, Shavu’ot, Sukkot, Tu Be’av, Tu Bishvat, and Purim. According to Yaffah Berlovitz, this timing serves to underscore the inherent sanctity of life in the Land of Israel, where the festive air of the holidays suffuses the entire year and shares their holiness with each passing day.[[49]](#footnote-50)

Like other thinkers among the Chovevei Tziyyon, Jawitz aspired to shape a Palestinian Jewish identity distinct from that of the Jews in exile. According to Jawitz, the figure of the ‘New Jew’ combined three elements of Jewish identity: the Hebrew nation, the Land of Israel, and the Torah. In his stories, he depicts this figure as one possessing physical and spiritual strength, ethical perfection, and national consciousness, in addition to maintaining a religious consciousness, which Jawitz believed ought to be preserved. A Jewish youth of the Land of Israel, according to Jawitz, must possess a strong national consciousness and be acquainted with his national language, history, and homeland. He must find employment in a productive pursuit, preferably agriculture, and bear himself virtuously, with love of labor and abstemiousness. He must be courageous and physically powerful, but exploit his strength only when necessary. He is also obliged to fear God and to be well-versed in Scripture, rabbinic lore, and halakhah, though he need not be a scholar after the Lithuanian model.[[50]](#footnote-51)

As Berlovitz has noted, the literary writing of Zeev Jawitz had the role of “a laboratory for the creation of historiographically potent material,”[[51]](#footnote-52) meaning that as of this point, a key goal of his literary production was to produce literary documentation of the history of the renewed Jewish presence in the Land of Israel. She argues that he chose literature as the genre of his historical documentation due to his appreciation of the historical value of ancient aggadic literature, as expressed in שיחות מני קדם. His descriptions of life in the Yishuv are so glowing as to leave the impression that not only is life there better than in the Diaspora, but human relationships in the Land of Israel, between fathers and sons, man and neighbor, employer and worker, and so on, are healthy, full, loving, and graced by mutual understanding.[[52]](#footnote-53) In one story, he even draws a distinction between the cats of Palestine and of Europe, “for in the lands of the north there is everlasting hatred between the members of this species; here they engage in neither injurious nor destructive behavior toward one another,”[[53]](#footnote-54) suggesting the realization of Isaian prophecy that dangerous creatures would undergo a fundamental transformation in the End of Days. In his stories, Jawitz focuses on the positive aspects of life in the moshavot, adhering to the set, stable structure of Jewish history described by his historiographic theories and deemphasizing minor events in the gentile world. For him, it was the spiritually and emotionally charged reunion of a nation and homeland long separated, God’s dreamlike return of the captivity of Zion as foretold by the psalmist, that was the main event to be documented for posterity.[[54]](#footnote-55)

Jawitz also rendered a valuable service to the Chibbat Tziyyon movement, as recorded in *Hamaggid*: “The books of Mr. Jawitz are highly effective in drawing in the hearts of readers, because his language is rich in novel and pleasant turns of phrase yet does not lose its Hebrew flavor, and all his images are alive and animated, and arouse and stir the hearts of their readers to the love of Zion and the idea of settlement.”[[55]](#footnote-56) Literary critics complained, though, that notwithstanding his elegant writing style and the precise descriptions of landscapes and everyday life, his plots and characters were flat, and the deep sense of conflict quintessential to the modern novel was nowhere to be found in his narratives. One critic blamed these defects on the alleged naiveté of the author:

His stories could have come out quite well, yet what stands in the way? Iniquity stands in the way—not its presence, but quite the contrary, its absence: the lack of some leavening agent, a thing to produce some effervescence, the lack of struggle, of conflict between aspirations coming from the nature of the protagonists themselves or some external coincidence to cast jealousy and contest, bad blood and letch, inside the dramatis personae. In his stories there is no antagonism, no positive character set against negative, as we find in virtually all the stories of the other nations, which earns them such great interest, but all is equilibrious. It is evident that, since he himself is an individual of good character, he has difficulty escaping from his own personality and ‘being wicked’ in his own eyes, even for one hour, so that he will have something to draw from in his creative labor, in whose image and character to create. In truth, is this ability to escape from one’s own personality not the totality of art, its foremost condition?[[56]](#footnote-57)

A general critique of works produced by writers of the First Aliyah, including Jawitz, about the Land of Israel was offered some ten years later by author and critic Yosef Haim Brenner, who charged that although their stories were able “to gladden the hearts of habitués in the diaspora of Israel, they never will appeal to the heart and soul of the true reader.”[[57]](#footnote-58) According to Brenner, the stories of Jawitz and his colleagues fail to shake the reader and to produce a catharsis as is required by the tradition of the modern novel, dating to nineteenth-century Europe. In another critique of the stories of the First Aliyah, including an analysis of Jawitz’s “בדרך צאתי” (in כנסת ישראל, 1886), Brenner goes further, condemning them as pathetic, naive, comically ridiculous, and smacking of cheap idealism.[[58]](#footnote-59) His denunciation of the genre in the early 1900s was one factor behind the decline of interest in the writers of the First Aliyah, including Jawitz. Years later, S. Y. Agnon similarly argued that “all of the storytellers of the Land of Israel, from the days of Rabbi Zeev Jawitz until Moshe Smilansky, saw what they wanted the land to show them more than they saw the land itself.”[[59]](#footnote-60)

Spreading and Expanding the Hebrew Language

Beginning in the 1880s, nationalistic Jews began to mull the idea of revitalizing Hebrew as a spoken language. If that goal were to be accomplished, it would require the development of new vocabulary where appropriate terms were lacking, standardized pronunciation, and the establishment of conventions befitting a modern language. The most renowned of the figures who pursued this task was Eliezer Ben Yehuda, who pioneered the Hebrew-in-Hebrew (*Ivrit be’Ivrit*) method of education in the Land of Israel while at the Alliance school in Jerusalem, where he was hired to teach in 1882. The work of Ben Yehuda, however, was preceded by the efforts of others to restore Hebrew as a spoken language with a sufficient lexicon. One such individual was Yechiel Michael Pines, Jawitz’s brother-in-law and a significant influence on him in this area.[[60]](#footnote-61) As early as 1879, Pines conceived a curriculum for schools to be established in the Land of Israel that had conversational Hebrew at its core.[[61]](#footnote-62)

Even before he and Golda were married, Jawitz made clear that the Hebrew language would be a fixture of their home. In one of his love letters before their wedding, he reprimands her “for intermixing in our joy an alien thing, for making the language of Germany that intervening between us,” and establishes that they will correspond not in German, but in Hebrew. “True, I can esteem the value of it [i.e., German], for it is rich and what is spoken in it is comprehensible to many a person. Yet rich and great though it may be, can it rival Hebrew in its penury? Or blossom, with all its delicate youth, as the daughter of Judah in her ancient age? But what is this I say? She is not yet aged, her splendor is not yet departed, for continually does she renew her youth, and any who touches her becomes hallowed as is she.”[[62]](#footnote-63) From that time, Jawitz kept up a correspondence with his brother-in-law regarding the Hebrew language. In his letters, he proposed neologisms based on his knowledge of rabbinic literature, including the Mishnah, Tosefta, Babylonian Talmud, Jerusalem Talmud, and midrashic works, as well as the translations of the Ibn Tibbon family. Thus in a letter sent in the spring of 1880, Jawitz proposed the word פרידה as a Hebrew term for *atom*, invoking the use of the word in Tractate Niddah of the Babylonian Talmud in the sense of a tiny grain. Grammatically, he justified his choice with the similar nominal pattern of פרוטה, a coin that cannot be exchanged for coins of smaller denomination (פ-ר-ט): “thus an atom is the separated part and cannot separate further.”[[63]](#footnote-64)

As early as his 1888 curriculum על דבר החנוך לילדי האכרים בארץ ישראל, Jawitz prescribed study of Hebrew as a living language, in part because of the need for a language to unify Jews of different origins. “The tongue of the Israelites, which to those in exile is nothing more than the holy tongue, is unambiguously necessary in the Land of Israel, to which the seed of Jacob shall stream from the farthest reaches of the west, the corners of the east, the fringe of the south, and the extremity of the north. It alone shall intervene between them, the single crossbar that braces the entire tent of the daughter of my nation from end to end.”[[64]](#footnote-65) Aside from the practicalities of unifying the new arrivals, Jawitz considered the Hebrew language a key aspect of Jewish nationhood. In his description, “this is the reason we are taught to list the power of linguistic unity first among those things with power to turn a great mass of people into a single nation: because if it is here, then all is here—unity of thought and unity of action, unity of feeling and unity of custom.”[[65]](#footnote-66) In his plan, he described speaking in Hebrew as the leading tool for inspiring love of the Jewish nation and its land, “for the language of the people was begotten by its spirit, and without speaking the language of his people, a person cannot think the thought of his people in all its power and purity.”[[66]](#footnote-67) There is a powerful connection, Jawitz believed, between the Hebrew language and the Jewish culture of the ages, and though language serves as a means of expressing cultural content, it also leaves its mark on that content. His comments are reminiscent of the opinion of Achad Ha’am that “language possesses great importance due to its psychological function, and there are even those who say that it is language that created thought, and not the opposite.”[[67]](#footnote-68) Like Ben Yehuda, Jawitz advocated use of a Sephardic Hebrew accent, “which is advantageous for its precision and the beauty with which it rings,” and because Sephardic Jews were more proficient in Hebrew than were their Ashkenazic brethren.[[68]](#footnote-69) Though Jawitz conceded that Hebrew “had not been adequately refined” as a conversational language, he wrote that this was “no matter, for it is the way of languages to become refined of their own accord when they have the benefit of proper writers.”[[69]](#footnote-70) Jawitz counted himself among these “proper writers” charged with refining and developing the Jewish national language, and he contributed many new Hebrew words. He proposed that the rejuvenation of the Hebrew language be treated similarly to Torah study or serious scientific research, and called for “making a bulwark for the Torah and producing duly experienced students to produce translations, resourcefully, with fine perspicacity, in accordance with writers and skillful experts, not chatterers and not everymen, for our holy language shall be its own language, independent of the view of the writer, his land, and the language in which he speaks.”[[70]](#footnote-71)

In 1889, Jawitz joined Safah Berurah, a group whose stated goal was to revive Hebrew as a conversational language. About one year later, the group established the Council of the Language under the leadership of Eliezer Ben Yehuda to expand the language by finding usable Hebrew equivalents for commonplace expressions where these were lacking. However, the organ lacked staying power, and its efforts came to an end in 1891.[[71]](#footnote-72)

History

Jawitz began writing history during the 1880s. He initially achieved recognition in this field mainly for “מגדל המאה,” a lengthy article published in *Kneset Yisra’el* in 1886/1887 that surveyed the one hundred years between the passing of Moses Mendelssohn (1786) and that of Moses Montefiore (1886).[[72]](#footnote-73) Some years later, while in Jerusalem, he began work on his comprehensive work of Jewish history, תולדות ישראל. His history is structured similarly to that of Heinrich Graetz (1817–91), the famed historian of the Breslau School,[[73]](#footnote-74) and similarly extends from the time of the Patriarchs to the end of the nineteenth century. Jawitz’s work might be described as an alternative to that of the older historian, as Jawitz himself wrote in his 1898 article “להשיב דבר”: “Indeed, every reader of this book knows that our method of investigating Jewish history is as distant from that of Graetz as east is distant from west. As for the manner in which the spirit of our past is arranged, the arrangement of nearly the entire book, from beginning to end, is as a single continuous protest.”[[74]](#footnote-75)

First, Jawitz argues that Graetz and his fellow practitioners of Wissenschaft des Judentums were influenced by their gentile teachers and thus fell prey to their errors and distortions. “Most studies of Jewish history conducted by gentile scholars to this day,” charges Jawitz, “are faulty or lacking in approach, to a greater or lesser extent: they either lack information, or they possess preconceptions which prevent knowledge of Israel from gathering and enduring in their minds in its pure state without absorbing the taint of the taste and smell of their views, which greatly impairs and distorts it.”[[75]](#footnote-76) In effect, this is a continuation of the criticism of German Jewish historian Isaak Markus Jost by Solomon Löb Rappoport, who accused Jost of being overly dependent upon non-Jewish sources.[[76]](#footnote-77) Jewish history, according to Jawitz, is fundamentally different from that of the other nations in that the cultures of those peoples consist mainly of influences exerted by neighboring cultures, whereas Jewish culture is essentially intrinsic, rooted in divine revelation. It follows from this crucial difference that different methods of inquiry be brought to bear in exploring the history of the Jews, and that the historicist method, which seeks to identify foreign influences and is a fitting tool for the study of other nations, is inappropriate for the study of Jewish history.[[77]](#footnote-78) However, charged Jawitz, even moderate Wissenschaft scholars were unwilling to forgo the approach that dominated the study of gentile history.[[78]](#footnote-79) He also felt that only an individual who is intimately tied to the Jewish nation and its ancient culture could develop a true understanding of Jewish history, because “this history, with which the development of Judaism concluded and became a single whole in the world, progressed in secret and never was exposed to the eyes of aliens except from without …”[[79]](#footnote-80)

This sensibility was informed by the nationalistic and religious historiosophic approach taken by Jawitz, under the particular influence of Judah Halevi, Nachmann Krochmal, and Samuel David Luzzatto.[[80]](#footnote-81) According to this view, the national character and cultural underpinnings of the Jewish people are fundamentally different from those of other peoples, a concept described by Halevi as “the excellence of Israel,”[[81]](#footnote-82) and by Krochmal, borrowing a Hegelian concept, as the Volksgeist (national spirit) of the Jews,[[82]](#footnote-83) while Luzzatto depicted it in terms of his Judaism–Atticism dichotomy.[[83]](#footnote-84) As early as 1893, in a letter to Moses Leib Lilienblum, Jawitz noted his identification with Luzzatto, who “in his great discernment had taught him as of now to identify the great distance between the creed of Israel and that of Greece and its disciples, and how each is the absolute antithesis of the other.”[[84]](#footnote-85) To sustain this position, Jawitz looked to the young field of Völkerpsychologie, in which research had begun in the late nineteenth century.[[85]](#footnote-86) The pioneers of the field were Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903) and Heymann Steinthal (1823–99), two Jewish German brothers-in-law who argued for the existence of a national analog to the psychology of the individual. Just as individual psychology is concerned with the analysis of human personality as reflected by the manifestations of the emotional life, imagination, and intellect of a person, it was argued, national psychology was a means of understanding the national character of a people as reflected by its various literary, legal, ethical, artistic, and institutional manifestations. According to Lazarus and Steinthal, nations are the collective units on which individual cultures are built, and an investigation of the national character of a given people requires that the observer consider the various aspects of its culture as expressions of inherent national characteristics. Because these characteristics are internal to the nation, the scholarly emphasis must be placed on internal sources.[[86]](#footnote-87)

The Jews, Jawitz argues, possess a closed, self-sufficient culture, while other cultures are open and require external assistance to develop. Thus an examination of Jewish culture requires a different methodology from that prevalent in the study of other cultures. Jawitz therefore saw fit to rewrite Jewish history from an ‘authentically’ Jewish perspective informed by a living connection to the sources of Jewish culture. Unlike previous works, his would not contaminate its subject by mixing it with others. The pivot to Jewish history, though, was not solely a result of this ambition. In a friendly letter written in 1910 to Benjamin M. Lewin, Jawitz revealed an additional motivation:

I thought in my youth to write of the sapiential and ethical approach of Judaism, which is different in kind from all other religions and philosophies. […] I thought better and reached the conclusion that this benefit, the benefit of providing a truthful depiction of the wisdom and ethics of Judaism and cultivating minds to recognize it, would be better accomplished by arranging Jewish history properly and investigating it truly, and thus I then set my sights on the work in which I have engaged from my youth until this day.[[87]](#footnote-88)

Jewish history, as understood by Jawitz, is the realization of the philosophical principles and ethical values of Judaism across time, and thus the most appropriate means of teaching and clarifying them.[[88]](#footnote-89)

The first reviews of the volumes of תולדות ישראל were written in Hebrew by Eastern European maskilim of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Jawitz’s work also earned the consideration of Simon Dubnow, writing under the pseudonym Criticus in the Jewish Russian journal *Voskhod*, who criticized it for its alleged religious fanaticism.[[89]](#footnote-90) About one year after the publication of the first volume, on the Biblical Era, the recently established journal *Hashilo’ach* printed a review by Moses Leib Lilienblum. Though he commended Jawitz’s literary style and applauded the book for being “full of a spirit of grace, passionate love of Israel and the light that is in its Torah,” Lilienblum argued that the book was insufficiently critical of the traditional sources, especially rabbinic legends.[[90]](#footnote-91) Achad Ha’am lamented in one of his contributions to *Hashilo’ach* what he viewed as a decline in published matter to a point where books of history were being written in a Jewish spirit.[[91]](#footnote-92) More severe criticism came some years later from historian Joseph Klausner, a disciple of Achad Ha’am, who charged that Jawitz’s Orthodoxy made him incapable of being a critical historian.[[92]](#footnote-93)

Jawitz and Achad Ha’am

The stories and books of Zeev Jawitz gained popularity among the nationalistic Jews of Eastern Europe, and sales earned him a respectable livelihood. Favorable reviews appeared in the Hebrew press, and they included warm recommendations that readers purchase his works.[[93]](#footnote-94) Jawitz became especially influential among young adults, who proved an avid audience for his stories of the Land of Israel, and greatly impacted on such luminaries as Joseph Klausner, Ben Zion Dinur, and Rabbi Isaac Nissenbaum, as attested in their memoirs.[[94]](#footnote-95) In the summer of 1922, Judah Loeb Jawitz informed his father of a meeting in Antwerp with the leading poet Chaim Nachman Bialik. Among his comments, the younger Jawitz wrote: “And further, how happy we were to hear from him, in his great innocence and sincerity, that you, my father, you are his teacher and master and that you were almost the only one to influence his spirit and the future of our literature. […] He told us about your all your literary work in detail, and I observe that he never stopped studying them, for there is no article you published that he has not read, and all has been inscribed in his mighty mind.”[[95]](#footnote-96) In one of his letters, Bialik describes the influence exercised by Jawitz on the Chovevei Tziyyon chapter at the yeshiva of Volozhin and states that his first article, “רעיון הישוב,” published in *Hamelitz* in the spring of 1892, was an attempt at synthesizing the views of Jawitz and Achad Ha’am. (“Two opposites such as these,” he writes, “only a young man from Volozhin can fuse!”)[[96]](#footnote-97) In his article, clearly referring to such works as those of Jawitz, Bialik calls “to disseminate among our brethren who are settling in the Holy Land books and stories written according to the spirit of the time that appeal to the heart—that are dedicated to this aim: the aim of improving the state of ethics—so that they will pleasurably absorb a good, pure lesson that enters the bones of the reader like oil, to inspire them to love their nationalism and their Judaism, their land and their people, their Torah and their language, and their labor indoors and in the field.”[[97]](#footnote-98) Members of the fairer sex also numbered among Jawitz’s audience, taking advantage of an accessible religious literature written in simple Hebrew. One of these readers, Devorah Gintzburg, authored an 1894 article defending Jawitz:

Does the unnamed scholar know what Jawitz is to us? For he is a creator of the speech of the lips, and gives us a generation that knows the language of Eber [i.e., Hebrew] and the history of its nation. With his dear books he stokes within us fiery sparks of the holy tongue, and love and respect for all the sanctities of the members of our nation, and wherever his books arrive, the young women of the House of Israel also have begun to rouse themselves and begun to learn our holy tongue.[[98]](#footnote-99)

This happy state of affairs, however, was transitory. Reviews disparaging Jawitz as a clerical threat who sought to undermine Enlightenment values began to appear in 1893/1894, and these dealt a successful blow to the erstwhile favorable attention enjoyed by his writings.[[99]](#footnote-100) Jawitz took the criticism as a declaration of cultural war, and attempted to counter them aggressively. In a series of letters published in *Hamelitz* during the spring of 1894, he complained of Jewish authors attempting “to eradicate the spirit of Israel from our new literature.” These authors, he claimed, were persecuting him and attacking his books on account of his Orthodox religious beliefs.[[100]](#footnote-101) Achad Ha’am, who was targeted by these accusations along with his followers, denied them vociferously,[[101]](#footnote-102) while his associates saw them as nothing more than a marketing ploy to compensate for decreased book sales.[[102]](#footnote-103) About half-a-year later, in a letter to his brother-in-law Davidson, Jawitz wrote that “the prayers of the men of the Great Assembly during their twenty-four fasts that authors of books not become wealthy have been fulfilled with me, and a certain sect only latterly arisen among Israel [viz., the Sons of Moses] whose leader is in Odessa, greater part in Warsaw, and tail in Jaffa has toiled to uphold my faith in those prayers by exploiting its power to the utmost in order to make the fruit of my spirit anathema to their allies and comrades.[[103]](#footnote-104) Jawitz now began to perceive Achad Ha’am as a key enemy, and his own literary path as the opposite of that of his nemesis. Nevertheless, Jawitz was willing in 1896 to have his brother-in-law Fischel Pines convey an article to *Hashilo’ach*, a journal edited by Achad Ha’am, though it must be said that the essay consisted mainly of an attack on the position of the latter and appears to have been intended chiefly to gauge his tolerance. Jawitz ultimately withdrew the piece because of editorial intervention in its style.[[104]](#footnote-105)

During the early 1890s, Jawitz and Achad Ha’am had conducted a friendly correspondence about intellectual matters, agreeing that “we have in our possession at this time no weapon or shield for the settlement of our land, and for our homeland outright, other than literature alone.”[[105]](#footnote-106) Jawitz sent Achad Ha’am the annuals that he published and stories that he wrote, and Achad Ha’am retained him to translate “פסח של גלויות,” a story by Heinrich Heine.[[106]](#footnote-107) Yet the relationship was brief and soon broke apart. Criticism of Jawitz by followers of Achad Ha’am and the response of the former followed the emergence of the fissure and a conflict between Achad Ha’am and Jawitz’s brother-in-law, Yechiel Michael Pines, in which Jawitz played a significant role on the side of his relative.

In 1892, Yechiel Michael Pines and Isaac Ben Tovim were removed from the Jaffa executive committee of the Chovevei Tziyyon by the central committee of the movement, based in Odessa, on the grounds that they had used executive committee funds to support Jewish immigrants in danger of expulsion by the Ottoman authorities, instead of expending the money for the purpose of settlement. Pines was concurrently removed from the Jaffa branch of the Sons of Moses by Achad Ha’am, an affront that hurt him deeply. Both dismissals were attributed to Achad Ha’am, who wielded extensive influence over the central committee of the Chovevei Tziyyon in Odessa. The outbreak of tensions brought about a fierce controversy between Jawitz and his followers and Achad Ha’am and his own, centered on the establishment of the Jaffa school. In 1892 and 1893, the members of the Sons of Moses in Jaffa established two schools, one for boys and one for girls, in cooperation with B’nei B’rith and the Alliance. Neither the official curriculum, which combined religious and secular studies, nor the use of Hebrew as the language of instruction aroused any controversy. However, the new school aroused strong opposition from the Orthodox, led by Pines and Jawitz, for the irreligious lifestyle of its teachers, which was also reflected in the instruction provided to their students. These teachers made no secret of their aspiration to cultivate a generation of nonobservant nationalistic Jews. In the view of Jawitz, the educators taught the Tanakh, which was not sacred to them in the least, only as a means of imparting knowledge of the Hebrew language, and they preferred the secular nationalism of Ben Yehuda’s history text to that written by Jawitz, among other grievances. Already in 1893, the Sons of Moses in Jaffa decided to ban all books by Jawitz from their school due to the obvious religiosity of their content. Pines, Jawitz, and their allies took this as a casus belli in an all-out culture war, and demanded an immediate end to the status quo. Pines’s entreaties to Achad Ha’am to find replacements for the teachers came to nothing. They understood that if the school were to remain as it was, there would be no return: the rupture between denominations in the Yishuv and within the Chovevei Tziyyon would become irreparable.[[107]](#footnote-108) The tempo of mudslinging between the two camps meanwhile quickened, and Jawitz tried to convince the residents of Gederah, who had been patronized by Pines in the past and were among his admirers, “to protest against those reviling our friend, the sage Mr. Pines, may he live long.”[[108]](#footnote-109)

Ultimately, beyond the heat of the loaded debate over the Jaffa school in which Jawitz and Achad Ha’am played prominent opposing parts, the two were locked in a battle for the same role. They had begun their literary careers at almost the same time. Each wished to be the leader who would set the nature of a renewed Jewish culture as the people of Israel returned to the Land of Israel. Each viewed his success in this mission as a critical condition for the success of the Jewish national movement. Jawitz had preceded Achad Ha’am in several areas of activity that they had in common: rejuvenation of Hebrew as a spoken language, adaptation of rabbinic legend, production of textbooks and literary anthologies. He saw a need for immediate settlement of the land, and was unready to wait for the masses to be convinced of that need. Still, the paths taken by the two men were antithetical to each other, and a head-on collision was inevitable from the moment Achad Ha’am ceased to obfuscate his attitude toward religion in 1893/1894, when he published the article, later named “Torah of the Heart,” in which he first unambiguously criticized halakhah as a decrepit and oppressive institution and identified the Chovevei Tziyyon movement as the core of contemporary Judaism.[[109]](#footnote-110) In the view of Achad Ha’am, that movement was the natural continuation of the heritage of the Jewish people, because it alone had the potential to preserve and strengthen Jewish identity, unlike liberal movements eager to inject external influences into Judaism, thus obscuring its uniqueness; and unlike Orthodoxy, which resolutely opposed any and all foreign influence upon Judaism and thus, he argued, was the cause of its atrophy. The heart of Judaism, Achad Ha’am believed, was not religion, but nationalism, as evidenced by the fact that the desire to exist as a nation was the source of the culture and national possessions of the Jewish people. Religion itself, he argued, was a cultural creation of the Jewish nation that had played a role in the life of the nation as it survived and began to emerge from the trials of exile. Now, he claimed, Judaism had an opportunity to return to its original national cultural matrix in the Land of Israel. The central role played by religion during the exile was nearing its end, bar only the uniquely Jewish ethical values based principally on the words of the prophets, which he felt had force beyond their religious context. He believed that religious feeling ought to be respected, above all because it had contributed somewhat to the survival of Judaism. Ultimately, however, the religious traditions of the nation would be sifted and reinterpreted with the aid of current, modern methods, despite their divergence from traditional scholarly ways.[[110]](#footnote-111) In effect, Achad Ha’am was a proponent of the secularization of Jewish culture, a process that he aided by emphasizing the nonreligious national possessions of Jewish culture and legitimizing religious nonobservance. Meanwhile Jawitz, as described above, believed in a revealed Torah that was the wellspring of Jewish culture and the source from which it would be renewed, as well as the source of all of the national possessions of the nation of Israel: land, language, literature, and history. He therefore refused to compromise on the religious aspects of Judaism, combining them with the national elements, which he also considered inseparable from the Jewish religion, while declining to legitimize any form of religious nonobservance. He subscribed to the view of his brother-in-law Pines that Jewish religion and Jewish nationalism cannot be separated,[[111]](#footnote-112) and any attempt at thus segregating the Jewish body and soul was doomed to oblivion and decay. Jawitz came to view the project of Achad Ha’am as a reprise of the Reform Movement that threatened to undermine and destroy Judaism, “like rot to the house of Israel.” In approaching Achad Ha’am and his followers, Jawitz did not display the tolerance and magnanimity that he showed other individuals, movements, and denominations that were also far from his path, but did not march under the banner of an ideology that sought to destroy Jewish tradition and desecrate Scripture. Yet while Achad Ha’am worked in the hub of the clamorous Jewish intellectual life of the Russian Empire and was already the leader of an army of young, energetic followers organized through the Sons of Moses,[[112]](#footnote-113) Jawitz, who went about his endeavors far from the centers of the Jewish intelligentsia, was a general without an army.

In Politics

In 1897, Jawitz departed the Land of Israel. During the months that followed, he wandered from one Jewish community to another in the Pale of Settlement. Eventually, Jawitz established himself in Vilnius, where he continued writing his historiographic opus and briefly worked as an assistant to Nahum Sokolow, editor of *Hatzefirah*. During this period, as another means of bringing his dreams to fruition, he first ventured into politics. Even before leaving Jerusalem, Jawitz had kept abreast of the rise of Herzl and his earliest efforts for the Jewish nation. In the summer of 1896, Jawitz and several of his associates, among them his brother-in-law Yechiel Mikhel Pines and David Yellin, had together sent a letter of support with Rosh Hashanah greetings to Herzl, written by Ephraim Cohn Reiss, principal of the Lämel School in Jerusalem. In the letter, they declared that the Hebrew year 5656 was the year of “the spiritual rebirth” of the Jewish state.[[113]](#footnote-114) Jawitz spent the summer of 1897 wandering between the communities of Eastern Europe in search of a new home; even had he possessed some free time, he would have had difficulty securing a place as a delegate to the First Zionist Congress, because he was not then a member of a Jewish community. Nevertheless, he kept himself apprised of events at the congress, expressing optimism for the project on which Herzl had embarked, as well as for his own personal yearning: to see the downfall of Achad Ha’am. He described his feelings at the time in a letter to his wife:

For the nation (*ha’am*) is disgusted by the taste of the “one” (*achad*) of it who would gorge it on alien books. The congress in Basel has caused the nation to recant, and it shall cast back those desecrating the sanctities of old and establish them as once they were, although the nation long has been disgusted by the cobwebs spun them by “the one.” For their eyes have been opened to perceive that these cannot clothe them, and now the public demands only stories seasoned with the spirit of their nation, taken from the treasury of its literature, its nature, and its history, and such stories I am beginning to write.[[114]](#footnote-115)

Jawitz joined the Zionist movement after settling in Vilnius in the fall of 1897; the next year he joined the Zionist Committee, established in that city following the Second Zionist Congress. In 1899, Jawitz published in *Hatzefirah* a defense of Herzl’s plans for Zionism against accusations that they were unrealistic,[[115]](#footnote-116) and described Zionism as “a vision lofty and exalted, holy and pure.”[[116]](#footnote-117) When Herzl visited Vilnius in the summer of 1903, Jawitz was selected by the local Jewish community to compose greetings for the esteemed guest, to whom they were presented on parchment in a dramatic ceremony. In his composition, Jawitz compared Herzl to Mattathias (the Hebrew equivalent of Theodor) and expressed hope “that through your agency, the Lord will hasten the salvation of Israel from Zion.”[[117]](#footnote-118)

In 1898, Jawitz participated in the establishment of Sha’arei Tziyyon, an organization intended to encourage public study of the Talmud. In the event, it became a platform for Zionist propaganda and produced several of the individuals who would go on to found the Mizrachi. In 1900, Jawitz participated in a discussion held in Vilnius about establishing a religious faction within the Zionist Organization. Among the other participants was Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines. The idea became reality two years later.[[118]](#footnote-119)

In 1902, the Mizrachi was founded as a religious Zionist faction in response, inter alia, to the establishment of the Democratic Faction, whose cultural platform the Mizrachi utterly repudiated. A group of young students influenced by Achad Ha’am had founded the Democratic Faction within the Zionist Organization the previous year. Their goal was to harness the Zionist movement to promote cultural and educational activities of a secular and modern character, and in doing so they unleashed the cultural question. That debate, which rocked the Zionist Organization, centered on the question of the rightful character of a Jewish national culture, and itself was introduced in reaction to the pragmatic and culturally neutral approach espoused by Herzl. The Democratic Faction, taking a position more extreme than Achad Ha’am, viewed religion as the stuff of exilic existence, a phenomenon at odds with modernity, while it saw progress, science, and related values as true to the new Jewish national identity. For this group, a new national culture was required both on intellectual grounds, for the purpose of self-definition, and especially to prod the development of Jewish identity in a direction that conformed to changes heralded by Zionism. They perceived their radical politics as an effective means for denying hegemony to the Orthodox and for encouraging secularized Jewish youth to join the Zionist movement. It also imbued in them a sense of themselves as a vanguard instructing the masses in the work of Hebrew culture. This perception gained expression in the new Hebrew literature of Bialik, Brenner, and Berdyczewski, which in turn greatly influenced nationalistically inclined young Jews in Eastern Europe during the opening years of the twentieth century.[[119]](#footnote-120)

At the founding convention of the Mizrachi, held in Vilnius on March 4–5, 1902, Jawitz was elected to the leadership of the organization. According to the official position dictated by its leader, Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines (1839–1915),[[120]](#footnote-121) Zionism was a purely corporeal movement with no relevance to cultural matters,[[121]](#footnote-122) but Jawitz personally opposed this view, and instead believed that the movement ought to promote a culture in keeping with Jewish tradition. So it was that when assigned to put his authorial skills to work writing the first official announcement of the Mizrachi, Jawitz formulated a compromise position.[[122]](#footnote-123) A key audience of the resulting program was the Orthodox community, which until that point had declined to participate in the Zionist movement due to the question of culture. At the beginning of the manifesto, Jawitz announces that the Zionist idea “in its very essence never has departed Israel since the days of the earliest prophets” and that anti-Semitism alone cannot explain the centrality of Zion. On the contrary, he argued, Zion’s centrality was owed to the fact that many intellectuals had come to recognize “that in the lands of exile it no longer is possible for the soul of the nation, our holy Torah, to endure at its full strength, or for its commandments, which alone are the entirety of its spiritual life, to be observed in perfect purity.” Jawitz thus inserted in the document a reflection of his view that the ills of exile were warping the authentic nature of Judaism.

Further on, Jawitz states that the Mizrachi was founded against the background of the secular cultural activity of some members of the movement, describing the main complaints resulting from it—the mingling of men and women at Zionist gatherings, freethinking literature, and reformed education—as intolerable to the observant. He assigns the new movement two functions. First, it is to engage in practical political Zionist activity in full cooperation with all other members of the Zionist movement, Second, separately from the secular Zionists, the Mizrachi is to apply itself to educational and cultural enterprises of a traditional character: “We find there to be no stronghold permitting our nation to endure and no haven permitting Zion to be reestablished other than observance of true Judaism in all its power and purity.”[[123]](#footnote-124)

Finally, Jawitz affirms that “Zion and Torah are two sanctities that supplement each other and require each other, and the love of Zion is the one barrier that will prevent the feet of your children from walking paths alien to the spirit of our people and from which, once they have grown accustomed to them, they never again will return.” Thus, according to Jawitz, it is the preservation of Jewish identity, not flight from anti-Semitism, that lies at the core of religious Zionism.

Jawitz had high hopes for the new faction as a means of making his vision a reality. He had reached the conclusion that the principal battleground of the culture war over the soul of the national renaissance was not the Land of Israel, but Europe. This sentiment was expressed in a letter sent to Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook in 1903, when both still were in Lithuania, discouraging Kook from migrating to the Land of Israel in order to accept an appointment as the rabbi of Jaffa:

Yet if his [i.e., Kook’s] main intention at this time is to exalt the glory of Judaism in the Land of Israel, let him forgive me if I say that the changing times have moved his battleground from the midst of the land elsewhere, to this place in which we dwell. Indeed, his glorious eminence knows that a great enemy [viz., Achad Ha’am] has risen against Judaism, against its people, against Zion, the likes of which has almost never arisen before. The host of his disciples have stolen into the congregation of the wholesome lovers of Zion, splitting it asunder and imprinting their calumnious heresy seasoned with the trappings of strange, indurate philosophy bearing a Zionist stamp. Against the Zionist fakery being furtively produced in burrows and basements, we, the reverent, ought to establish a center to make the character of pure, perfect, true Zionism clear to the entire nation. In it, we shall pronounce of the glory of our unadulterated and ancient faith, upright and aloud, though we shall not countenance blasphemy. We can do this only here, in the heart of Europe, in the market where the masses go about their lives, in the place where all sights are seen and all sounds heard.[[124]](#footnote-125)

At the first international congress of the Mizrachi, held in Pressburg in 1904, Jawitz called on members to assemble an alternative to a modern Hebrew literature “that preaches heresy and malfeasance, brazen criticism and violation of the honor of the prophets.” He berated the Hebrew authors led by Achad Ha’am, “a leading heretic,” for deranging the young generation and driving it to irreligion, and went on to advocate separating “from this literature completely and utterly, as Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch separated from the Reformers in Germany” and creating newspapers and textbooks informed by Jewish tradition. The address, which lasted some one-and-a-half hours, was well received, but the astringency of its attacks provoked opposition from some, such as Rabbi Reines, who hoped to avoid exacerbating tensions with the Democratic Faction. Despite these misgivings, the congress passed a number of resolutions in line with the demands pronounced by Jawitz, mainly concerning supervision of schools and textbooks. Outside the Mizrachi, followers of Achad Ha’am took advantage of the opportunity to skewer Jawitz for his religious posture.[[125]](#footnote-126) Ultimately, frustrated by the rejection of his great plans, Jawitz resigned from the Mizrachi leadership.

Jawitz left Vilnius in 1905 for Germany, where he continued working on his historiography. Despite his retirement from the Mizrachi leadership, he remained intermittently involved in religious Zionist politics. He served as a delegate representing Russian Mizrachi members at the 1908 congress of the movement, held in Frankfurt. That year, the congress deliberated on whether to extend the patronage of the Mizrachi to the Tachkemoni school, founded three years prior in Jaffa as a modernized cheder.[[126]](#footnote-127) Among the advocates of the idea was Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the rabbi of Jaffa and the moshavot, who sought to turn Tachkemoni into a nationalistic religious alternative to the secular Hebrew high school established in Jaffa in 1905. Jawitz was elected to the board of the school, a role which afforded him a hand in setting its curriculum, choosing a principal and teachers, and turning it into a high school.[[127]](#footnote-128) The institution, where instruction in both religious and secular subjects was provided in Hebrew, thus became the first Mizrachi school.

After the death of his wife in 1912, Jawitz joined the household of his daughter in Antwerp and effectively withdrew from politics. With the outbreak of the First World War, the family made its way to England. Only after the Balfour Declaration, in November 1917, did Jawitz return to political life. This time, his activities were devoted to a new venture founded by Rabbi Kook, who also was in England at the time of the historic proclamation.

Rabbi Kook had begun preparing a comprehensive plan of action for ramping up the cultural and intellectual struggle over the soul of the Zionist movement and the Yishuv.[[128]](#footnote-129) The plan, which fleshed out various ideas he had formulated during his tenure as the rabbi of Jaffa, called for founding a counterpart to the Zionist Organization that would include all Orthodox Jews, most of whom had been unwilling to embrace the Zionist movement. The new organization would take action in the three main areas in which the Zionist factions were already active: politics, practical initiatives, and culture—while remaining strictly devoted to tradition. In a clear contrast to the mainstream emphasis on Zion, the new movement would be called Degel Yerushalayim (the Flag of Jerusalem).[[129]](#footnote-130)

Rabbi Kook requested that Jawitz join him in this effort, and personally asked him to compose a manifesto clarifying these ideas and assuring Mizrachi members that Degel Yerushalayim was not a competing faction, but rather that it “only fortifies its [Mizrachi’s] position further, and paves it a path to broader aspirations.”[[130]](#footnote-131) Jawitz agreed, writing to Rabbi Kook that he had always argued, contrary to the Mizrachi leadership, for the necessity of cultural activity that hewed true to tradition. Jawitz proceeded to formulate a platform that put forward the ideas behind Degel Yerushalayim and explained to Mizrachi members that the new organization sought not conflict, but collaboration. He noted that with the issuance of the Balfour Declaration and the British conquest of Palestine, the Zionist movement no longer was as central as it had been in the establishment of the Jewish national home, so that even those who had opposed the movement on religious grounds now could join in the development of the Land of Israel without misgiving. He wrote that Degel Yerushalayim sought above all “to establish in our holy land a temple for the Torah of the Lord, a throne for the kingship of the Almighty, a keep for our ancient culture in all its grandeur and splendor, in all its purity and sanctity.”[[131]](#footnote-132) Rabbi Kook, who had intended to make much of the fact that one of the founders of the Mizrachi and its foremost intellectual had written the manifesto, was disappointed when Jawitz asked to remain anonymous.[[132]](#footnote-133) In the summer of the same year (1918), Jawitz paid ten pounds to gain membership in Degel Yerushalayim.[[133]](#footnote-134)

Even then, Jawitz remained active in the Mizrachi. He pressed the leaders of the organization in England to renew its political activities with full force and a focus on strengthening religious education in Palestine. In early 1919, he received an invitation from the Interim Mizrachi Centre of the United Kingdom, signed by Rabbi Dr. Victor (Avigdor) Schonfeld (1880–1930),[[134]](#footnote-135) to participate in the general meeting of the Mizrachi associations of that country in Manchester: “and let his honor be to us as eyes with his vast knowledge of these matters [i.e., of education] … and let his eminence come and enliven our soul.”[[135]](#footnote-136) Schonfeld himself delivered periodic updates to Jawitz and consulted with him on various questions that arose. Jawitz also corresponded with Orthodox painter Hermann Struck, one of the leaders of the Mizrachi in Germany, who invited him to take part in the activities of the cultural committee of the organization.[[136]](#footnote-137)

Jawitz reached the conclusion that his efforts at that time would be best spent promoting the adoption of religious education and Judaic law in the growing community of Jews in Palestine. In a March 1920 letter to Rabbi Kook, he describes a plan based on the first mishnah in Avot: “Indeed, the foremost of the national institutions of Israel are three, those enumerated by the men of the Great Assembly in their first mishnah, namely, law, students, and bulwarks for the Torah, which we call the court, the school and study hall, and observance of the commandments with appropriate adjustment to matters forbidden and permitted.”[[137]](#footnote-138) Jawitz believed that there would be no particular difficulty in securing satisfactory arrangements in the areas of kashrut, eruv arrangements, synagogues, and ritual baths. Even in education, despite his protestation that “our opponents have turned the schools into a debacle for all coming generations by teaching our soft, innocent children to deny the Torah of Moses and to hold our prophets who prophesied our redemption to be a cabal of liars and deceivers,” he was pleased by the agreement that the Orthodox would operate their own schools. In fact, he viewed such an arrangement as preferable to a joint education committee of observant and secular members, because even if there were an observant majority, it would be forced to compromise and traditional Judaism would not always be reflected in its decisions. It was in the spirit of these plans that Jawitz wrote “המזרחי ושאיפותיו,” his final political article, in *Hator*. In this piece, published in 1922, he calls for redoubling cultural efforts in the Land of Israel, particularly in the area of education, working to bring Judaic law into the courts, and cultivating the general public to recognize the intellectual supremacy of Judaism and the superiority of Jewish ethics.[[138]](#footnote-139)

Jawitz and Bialik

As noted above, eminent poet Chaim Nachman Bialik was influenced at the very start of his literary career by the writings of Jawitz. The very fact that Bialik chose to invest himself in producing Hebrew literature was in part a result of the cultural activity of the elder writer, and *Sefer Ha’aggadah*, the magnum opus created by Bialik and Joshua Chana Rawnitzki, was influenced by שיחות מני קדם, Jawitz’s pioneering work of adapted rabbinic legend. Ultimately, however, Bialik chose the path of Achad Ha’am and dedicated considerable effort to the cultural Zionism of the latter.

Despite the aforementioned similarity in their understandings of talmudic lore, Bialik sought to anthologize the aggadic corpus as a means of recanonizing traditional Jewish cultural sources in the service of his perception of Judaism as a national culture, as taught by Achad Ha’am. This canonization was of a primarily historical and literary character, and it sought to adapt the eminent literature produced by the generations of old for a new generation of readers unable to digest the traditional literature in the various strains of its original language.[[139]](#footnote-140) The first step toward canonization was to assemble this lore within *Sefer Ha’aggadah*, which Bialik saw as expressing national myths and values as shaped by the aggadic masters over the ages. In collecting this matter, Bialik chose not to include halakhic talmudic literature. Though in his chronological plan for gathering the material, allowance was made for an earlier halakhic work—namely, the Mishnah—the next stage incorporated aggadic but not legal elements of the Talmud.[[140]](#footnote-141) Jawitz, true to his view of Jewish history and creativity as a single continuum, was opposed to efforts at recanonization, and all the more so to the exclusion of talmudic halakhah from such a collection. He saw his own adaptations of Jewish legend as no more than another contribution to a grand edifice of Jewish creativity under constant construction since scriptural times, a contribution whose purpose was not to negate or to select specific parts of that structure, but to participate in its continued organic growth.

Yet despite his disdain for Achad Ha’am and his followers, Jawitz related to Bialik with no such antipathy. During his time in Germany, Jawitz was close to the editorial board of *Ha’ivri*, a newspaper based in Berlin whose editor was Rabbi Meyer Berlin, a leader of the Mizrachi. Berlin consulted with Jawitz on matters relating to the newspaper, though he did not always follow the advice he was given. As Berlin records in his memoirs, Jawitz felt that only God-fearing Jews ought to be permitted to publish articles in *Ha’ivri*, but when asked specifically about Bialik, responded that he was an exception.[[141]](#footnote-142) Why did Jawitz feel that Bialik merited special treatment? Was he unwilling, despite the views that Bialik espoused, to forgo an opportunity to benefit from his unique talent? Alternately, did Jawitz have a special place in his heart for the man who had continued his literary work of adapting the rabbinic legends so dear to him for contemporary consumption, despite the conflicting goals that informed their respective approaches?

Similarly, even after Bialik decided to follow the lead of Achad Ha’am, he continued to appreciate Jawitz’s abilities and style of writing. After the First World War, Moriyyah, the publishing house that Bialik and Rawnitzki headed, entreated Jawitz to produce an expanded edition of שיחות מני קדם, eventually leading to the posthumous publication of שיחות ושמועות מני קדם (London, 1927). Bialik and Rawnitzki also asked Jawitz to produce an annotated edition of Ben Sira incorporating sections recently discovered in the Cairo Genizah and a new translation of the other passages, to be published by Moriyyah. According to the publishers, Jawitz was “the only person capable of producing such a thing refined to utmost perfection.”[[142]](#footnote-143) In the summer of 1922, after a meeting with Bialik in Antwerp, Judah Loeb Jawitz informed his father that Bialik had expressed great appreciation of the elder Jawitz’s literary work,[[143]](#footnote-144) a sentiment that Bialik repeated in a letter to Judah Loeb after the passing of his father: “It is true and correct that I loved your father, may his memory be blessed, and held his life’s work dear.”[[144]](#footnote-145) Nevertheless, Bialik demurred when Judah Loeb asked him to compose an epitaph for his father, because “what you are asking me to do is beyond me, for I never have attempted this.”[[145]](#footnote-146) Bialik’s appreciation also did not inspire an offer to publish selected writings by Jawitz in a Moriyyah edition, even as such a proposal was forthcoming, in 1922, from Moses Joseph Gluecksohn, the editor of *Ha’aretz*, who was interested in publishing such a volume to be edited by Rabbi Binyamin (pseudonym of Joshua Radler-Feldman).[[146]](#footnote-147) Bialik did have a place in his heart for Jawitz and recognized a number of his aptitudes, but did not consider him to be of the same caliber as Achad Ha’am and by no means viewed him as a model to follow.

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In the spring of 1921, Jawitz received a letter from the founders of *Do’ar Hayom*, a group collectively known as Hasolel, asking to publish his positions on current issues relevant to the Zionist movement and the Yishuv, such as whether the physical development of the Land of Israel ought to take precedence over education, and whether the headquarters of the Zionist Organization should be moved to Palestine. “Broad circles of Jewry,” they wrote, “will be interested in reading his [i.e., your] views regarding these important questions.”[[147]](#footnote-148) Jawitz responded with a letter to the editor printed under the title “על התרבות הישראלית,” in a coda to the many and varied creations of his literary career that boldly proclaimed the idea that links them:

Indeed, my wish in all my books and articles has been to forward the observance of Judaism, whose foundations are our Torah, our homeland, the memories of our history, and our language, in all its ancient purity, and to give it hands, strength, a time, and a place to engender novel things each morn and to branch outward, not by extrinsic force, but of its own accord, according to its robust and ancient nature preserved in the depths of its being. To bring this aspiration to such a point is possible only with the return of the nation to its land. With the unification of Israel and the land, an Israelite culture pure and vigorous, native and not foreign-born, shall rise.[[148]](#footnote-149)

Jawitz saw himself as facilitating the birth of a renewed Hebrew culture, aiding the process by providing direction and cultivating optimal environmental conditions under which that culture would emerge into the world healthy, whole, and true to its innate essence, and then continue to grow and develop organically. This put him at odds with others who, Jawitz believed, were attempting to compel Hebrew culture to adopt the character of foreign cultures.

It was not for naught that Jawitz identified with Samuel David Luzzatto more than any other Jewish cultural leader of modern times. In the final analysis, Luzzatto was a Jewish neoromantic, an author whose works evince love of the people of Israel, of the Land of Israel, and of the Hebrew language, cleave closely to tradition and Jewish historical experience, and reject all speculative philosophy. Luzzatto’s criticism has been described by historian Shmuel Feiner as that of a “Counter-Haskalah,”[[149]](#footnote-150) a concept borrowed from a commentary in which Isaiah Berlin describes a Counter-Enlightenment, beginning in the eighteenth century, in which such European intellectuals as Vico, Rousseau, and Herder rejected the main principles of the Enlightenment, such as universalism, objectivity, and rationality.[[150]](#footnote-151) Luzzattos’ criticism describes a struggle between Judaism (*Judaismus*), representing faith, ethics, and love of good, and European culture (*Atticismus*), representing philosophy, science, rationalism, the arts, and aesthetics.[[151]](#footnote-152) Jawitz perceived himself as continuing the work of Luzzatto as a critic of the non-Jewish and inauthentic trends that had made their way into the new Jewish culture. However, while Luzzatto worked within the bounds of the Enlightenment, of which he was a product if ultimately a strong critic, Jawitz flourished in the novel, post-Haskalah setting of a newly emerging national Hebrew culture. His was an opposition not so much to the Haskalah as to cultural Zionism.

Jawitz claimed to be neither a revolutionary nor an innovator. He portrayed himself as a man whose work was to facilitate the organic development of a Jewish culture rooted in divine revelation, at the critical juncture of its return to the Land of Israel, where it first had been cast. This Jewish culture encompassed love of the Land of Israel, Hebrew language and literature, and Jewish history, all rudiments of Jewish national existence inseverably tied to the Jewish faith. At first, as he made his way to the Land of Israel in 1887, Jawitz believed that a renewal of Jewish culture was possible only in the cradle of Jewish civilization, but he later decided that the time was not ripe. Following his break with Achad Ha’am, and that between their respective followers, Jawitz became convinced that the hostilities in that culture war had to be waged most of all in Europe, then home to the Jewish masses and intelligentsia. Subsequently, after the Balfour Declaration and the beginning of British mandatory rule in Palestine, he determined that the critical time for cultural renewal centered in the Land of Israel finally had come.

Yet when all was said and done, few understood his message and answered the call, and his influence remained confined to a few loyal readers and associates, and to a narrow window within history.[[152]](#footnote-153) Despite his intentions and historical consciousness, and unlike Achad Ha’am, Jawitz failed to establish a cultural following that would continue forward on the trail he had first forged. Jawitz was not endowed with the charisma of an irresistible intellectual leader, and he did not leave dedicated students to propagate his teachings. The fact that he did not strike roots anywhere and needed to move every several years took its own toll on his ability to influence the masses. What is more, although Jawitz was active in a wide range of fields, he did not delve very deeply into any as did Bialik in poetry, Agnon in literature, Ben Yehuda in the Hebrew language, or Rabbi Kook in theology, and was prevented by the absence of such a contribution from leaving an enduring mark on later intellectuals.

The nonreligious ultimately rejected Jawitz due to his Orthodoxy and because his writing deviated so far from the literary and historiographical conventions of European culture and academia. In this respect, he suffered a fate shared with the other authors of the First Aliyah, whose popularity waned after the First World War. The Orthodox did not know how to deal with Jawitz’s novel creations, which challenged their inflexible conservative sensibilities, and thus redoubled their efforts to preserve the old. Calls from Jawitz for an aggressive reform of traditional Jewish education touched a nerve, and his historiography was open—too open, for their taste—to styles and conceptions advanced by the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement. Religious Zionists, meanwhile, were busy developing the Yishuv physically, creating a religious school system, establishing a rabbinate for the country, and protecting Orthodox laborers and functionaries. Intellectual affairs merited less of their attention. Though the religious Zionist public was Jawitz’s natural audience, and although it held him in high regard, he merited no office amid that population from which he could exercise authority, unlike writers and opinion leaders of the secular Zionist movements. Among Orthodox Jewry in Palestine, rabbis retained exclusive authority in all things intellectual. Thus Jawitz’s legacy, irrespective of its pioneering synthesis of religion, Haskalah, and nationalism, was not given the place it warranted, notwithstanding the contemporaneous recognition of secular intellectuals by their ideological and political movements.

Zeev Jawitz was a pioneer in the synthesis of tradition, modernity, and Zionism. His philosophy began to coalesce even before the Zionist movement appeared, and even longer before that movement split along ideological fault lines. It was his hope that that his synthesis would serve as a foundation for the cultural development of the evolving Yishuv. However, Jawitz and his broad ambitions fell prey to the polarization and ever-deepening rifts that plagued Jewish society in general and the Zionist movement in particular. History remembers him as a solitary intellectual belonging to one movement among many, and to whom even that movement failed to give due recognition.

1. Concerning Jawitz, see: Abraham Samuel Herschberg, “תולדות רבי זאב יעבץ ז"ל – למלאת עשר שנים ליום פטירתו,” in *Toledot Yisra’el* 14 (Tel Aviv, 1954/1955–1962/1963), 123–61; Geulah Bat-Yehudah, יודע העתים (Jerusalem, 2006); Reuven Michael, הכתיבה ההיסטורית היהודית (Jerusalem, 1993), 424–65. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jawitz to Haim Judah Rate, Kislev 2, 5679 [November 6, 1918], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Schwadron Collection, Jawitz file. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Asher Ginsberg, לא זה הדרך, *Hamelitz* 29 (II Adar 12, 5649 [March 15, 1889]), p. 4. Concerning Ginsberg, see Joseph Goldstein, אחד העם (Jerusalem, 1992); Steven Zipperstein, נביא חמקמק (Tel Aviv, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Gideon Shimoni, האידיאולוגיה הציונית (Jerusalem, 2001), 100–104. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Asher Ginsberg כל כתבי אחד העם (Jerusalem, 1946/1947), 440. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Joseph Goldstein, בני משה: סיפורו של מסדר חשאי, *Zion* 57 (1992): 175–205; Yosef Salmon, אם תעירו ואם תעוררו – אורתודוקסיה במצרי הלאומיות (Jerusalem, 2006), 182–93. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Yosef Salmon דת וציונות: עימותים ראשונים (Jerusalem, 1990), 173–203; Ehud Luz, מקבילים נפגשים (Tel Aviv, 1985), 299–316. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Bat-Yehudah, יודע העתים, 11–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Jawitz to Pines, n.d., Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection, 1602 Arc. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Concerning Gordon, see Shmuel Feiner, מלחמת תרבות: תנועת ההשכלה היהודית במאה ה-19 (Jerusalem, 2010), 265–78; Michael Stanislawski, *“For Whom Do I Toil?”: Judah Leib Gordon and the Crisis of Russian Jewry* (New York, 1988). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Gordon to Jawitz, n.d., NYPL, Jawitz Collection, item 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Concerning Smolenskin, see Shmuel Feiner, כפירתו של סמולנסקין בהשכלה ושורשי ההיסטוריוגרפיה היהודית לאומית, *Zionism* 16 (5752 [1991/1992]): 9–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. See Shmuel Feiner, השכלה והיסטוריה: תולדותיה של הכרת עבר יהודית מודרנית (Jerusalem, 1995), 458–67. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Mordechai Zalkin, ההשכלה היהודית בפולין – קווים לדיון, in קיום ושבר: יהודי פולין לדורותיהם, ed. Israel Bartal and Israel Gutman (Jerusalem, 2001), 2:404–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Jawitz, “מכתב אל…,” *Hashachar* 10 (1881/1882), 467. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Jawitz, “עט סופרים – עצת שלום מאת יעק"ב,” *Hamaggid*, July 26, 1882, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. See Michael A. Meyer, בין מסורת לקדמה (Jerusalem, 1989), 88–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Jawitz, “לברית עם לאור גוים,” *Hamelitz* 20 (Tevet 4, 5645 [December 22, 1884], 1598. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Ginsberg, כל כתבי אחד העם, 64–69. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Yaffah Berlovitz, “'שיחות ושמועות מני קדם' פואטיקה ומתודה בתורת העיבוד של זאב יעבץ,” in Encyclopedia of the Jewish Story (Ramat Gan, 2004), 1:203–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Jawitz, שיחות מני קדם (Warsaw, 1886/1887), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Jawitz, שיחות מני קדם, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Berlovitz, “שיחות ושמועות,” 206–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Tsafi Sebba-Elran, “'שלמה ואשמדאי' או 'מלך בלהות' – גלגולו המודרני של סיפור חז"ל באסופה 'שיחות מני קדם' מאת זאב יעבץ,” *Iggud* 3 (2005): 172–76. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Jawitz to Erlanger, Elul 14, 5646 [September 14, 1885], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection, Arc. 4 1602. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Eliezer Schweid, “ביאליק ומדע היהדות” *Jewish Studies* 35 (1995): 60–68; Israel Bartal, “מפעל הכינוס: מדעי היהדות ועיצוב 'תרבות לאומית' בארץ ישראל,” in וזאת ליהודה – מחקרים בתולדות ארץ ישראל ויישובה מוגשים ליהודה בן פורת, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Elchanan Reiner (Jerusalem, 2003), 520–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Jawitz to Harkavy, Tammuz 24, 5646 [July 27, 1886], Central Zionist Archives (CZA) A9\139. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Joseph Walk, “צמיחת החינוך הלאומי במושבות,” in ספר העלייה הראשונה, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1981), 414–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Mordechai Bar-Lev, “ר' זאב יעבץ כמבשר החינוך הדתי לאומי בארץ ישראל,” in בשבילי התחייה (1986/1987), 2:98. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך לילדי האיכרים בארץ ישראל,” *Ha’aretz*, sec. 2 (1890/1891), 58 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Mordechai (Marcus) Levin, ערכי חברה וכלכלה באידיאולוגיה של תקופת ההשכלה (Jerusalem, 1975). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך,” 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך,” 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך,” 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Jawitz, “החינוך והיישוב,” *Hamizrach* 1 (1902/1903–3/4) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Jawitz to Golda Pines, Av 14, 5630 [August 4, 1876], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection, Arc. 4 1602. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Walk, “צמיחת החינוך הלאומי,” 408–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Jawitz, “וידוי הגדול,” Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Jawitz, דברי הימים לעם בני ישראל מיום היותו עד יסוד הישוב החדש בארץ ישראל (Jerusalem, 1889/1890), introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Jawitz to Friedberg, Tishri 8, 5651 [October 10, 1891], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Friedberg Collection, V.898/48. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Yoseph Lang, דבר עברית! – חיי אליעזר בן יהודה (Jerusalem, 2008), 1–2:192. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. For a lengthier contrast of the two books, see Dan Porat, “The Nation Revised: Teaching the Jewish Past in the Zionist Present (1890–1913),” *Jewish Social Studies* 13, no. 1 (2006): 59–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Eliezer Ben Yehuda, דברי הימים לבני ישראל בשבתם על אדמתם (Jerusalem, 1896/1897), Introduction to the Second Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. In describing the giving of the Torah, Ben Yehuda (דברי הימים, 24) writes that God gave Moses “righteous laws, upright statutes, and virtues by which the Israelites were to conduct themselves with each other and in matters of national governance,” but makes no mention of mitzvot regulating human conduct toward God. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. Ben Yehuda, דברי הימים, 175. In the introduction to his 1904 sequel, דברי הימים לבני ישראל בגלותם, he remarks that the history of the exilic period is “not apt to enliven the spirit of our sons and daughters and rear up for us that generation for which we hope.” [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Jawitz, דברי הימים, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Jawitz, Introduction, in *Haaretz* (Jerusalem, 1890/1891), 1:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Jawitz, פסח בארץ ישראל (Warsaw, 1892/1893). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. Yaffah Berlovitz, “מאפו ויעבץ בארץ ישראל: לזיהויה של עמימות פואטית,” *Criticism and Interpretation* 43 (2010): 48–53. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. For a more extensive discussion, see Yaffah Berlovitz, “מודל 'היהודי החדש' בספרות העליה הראשונה,” *Aley Siach* 17–18 (1982/1983): 54–59; Berlovitz, להמציא ארץ להמציא עם (Tel Aviv, 1996), 18–26. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. Yaffah Berlovitz, “'הסדר השלישי – תור ישראל בארצו' יצירתו הספרותית של יעבץ בראי השקפתו ההיסטורית,” *Cathedra* 20 (July 1981): 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Berlovitz, “הסדר השלישי,” 179–80. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. Jawitz, “שוט בארץ,” in אעברה-נא בארץ: מסעות בארץ-ישראל של אנשי העלייה הראשונה, ed. Rechavam Zeevy (Tel Aviv, 1992), 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. Berlovitz, הסדר השלישי, 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. “באו חשבון,” *Hamaggid*, September 27, 1894, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. David Tzemach, “אוצר הספרה,” *Hamaggid*, July 9, 1903, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. Brenner, כל כתבי י"ח ברנר (Tel Aviv, 1937/1938), 8:318. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Brenner, כל כתבי, 9:436–37. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. Agnon, מעצמי אל עצמי (Tel Aviv, 2000), 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. Yosef Salmon and Keren Dubnov, “תרומתו של יחיאל מיכל פינס לתחיית הלשון העברית: חידושי מילים,” in לשוחח תרבות עם העלייה הראשונה: עיון בין תקופות, ed. Yaffah Berlovitz and Yoseph Lang (Tel Aviv, 2010), 47–69. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. Pines to Moses Montefiore Memorial Committee, in בנין הארץ, vol. 2, book 1 (Tel Aviv, 1938/1939), 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. Jawitz to Golda Pines, Elul 19, 5630 [September 15, 1870], NYPL, Jawitz Collection, item 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. Jawitz to Yechiel Michael Pines, Iyyar 29, 5640 [May 10, 1880], CZA, A9\139. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. Jawitz, Introduction, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. Jawitz, “העם ושפתו,” in גאון הארץ (Warsaw, 1894), 2:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך,” 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. Ginsberg, כל כתבי אחד העם, 413. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך,” 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך,” 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. Jawitz, “על דבר החינוך,” 60. For a review of the method preferred by Jawitz for developing new Hebrew words, see Joseph Klausner, “מלים מחודשות וכתיבה תמה,” *Hamelitz*, March 1, 1893, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. Lang, דבר עברית, 169–81; Eisenstadt, שפתנו העברית החיה, 27–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. See Michael, הכתיבה ההיסטורית היהודית, 425–28. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Concerning Graetz, see Michael, היינריך גרץ: ההיסטוריון של העם היהודי (Jerusalem, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. Jawitz, תולדות ישראל (Tel Aviv, 1954/1955–62/63), 14:220. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. Ibid., 1:IV. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. Feiner, השכלה והיסטוריה, 182–83. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. Jawitz, תולדות ישראל, 1:III. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. Ibid., IV. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. Ibid., VI. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. Concerning the historical philosophy of Jawitz and its inspirations, see Ester Segal Etan, “החשיבה ההיסטורית של זאב יעבץ,” master’s thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 1989, 33–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. Halevi, *Hakuzari*, 1:37–43. For further discussion of this concept, see Shalom Rosenberg, “לב וסגולה – רעיון הבחירה במשנתו של ריה"ל ובפילוסופיה היהודית החדשה,” in משנתו ההגותית של רבי יהודה הלוי, ed. Jonah Ben-Sasson (Jerusalem, 1977/1978), 109–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. Nachmann Krochmal, כתבי רבי נחמן קרוכמאל: ערוכים ומוגהים בצרוף מבוא הערות השואת גרסאות לוח מונחים ומפתחות על ידי שמעון ראבידוביץ (Berlin, 1923/1924), 34–40. Krochmal distinguishes between the “national spirit” of the Jewish people and that of the other nations: “Thus is it among all other nations, that the spiritual within them is private, and therefore bounded and destined for destruction. In our nation, however, though in relation to the physical and the externality of the senses we too have capitulated to the aforementioned natural phenomena, nevertheless, it is as those of blessed memory said: ‘They were exiled to Babylonia—the divine presence was with them. They were exiled to Elam—the divine presence was with them,’ etc., meaning that the general spirituality inside us will protect us and save us from the fate of all mortals.” See further Feiner, השכלה והיסטוריה, 163–68. On the similarities and differences between the views of Krochmal and Hegel, see Shlomo Avineri, “The Fossil and the Phoenix: Hegel and Krochmal on the Jewish Volksgeist,” in *History and System: Hegel’s Philosophy of History* (Albany, 1984), 47–72. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. Samuel David Luzzatto, “דרך ארץ או אטיציזמוס – שירת שד"ל לדורו,” in *Tziyyon* 1 (1840/1841): 81–93. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. Etan, “החשיבה ההיסטורית,” 49. Jawitz, following Luzzatto, draws his own distinction between “the system of beliefs and virtues that derive from the creed of Moses as opposed to those beliefs and virtues that derive from the creed of Greece”; Jawitz, “עולמות עוברים,” 43–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. In his article “האחדות,” *Hamizrach* 1 (5663–64), 10, Jawitz writes: “In recent generations the scholars of Europe have conceived a great advance in the arrangement of history by examining and finding that just as the individual possesses a good quality that distinguishes him from other persons—‘for their minds are unalike and their visages are unalike’—thus does each nation have a unique good quality that distinguishes it from other nations, and this truthful persuasion has become a great, polychotomous discipline fully formulated, known as the theory of the national soul [i.e., Völkerpsychologie].” [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. See Eliezer Schweid, תולדות פילוסופית הדת היהודית בזמן החדש (Tel Aviv, 2003), vol. 3a, 105–13; Ingrid Belke, ed., *Moritz Lazarus und Heymann Steinthal—die Begründer der Völkerpsychologie in ihren Briefen* (Tübingen, 1971). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. Jawitz, “נפש חיה,” *Takhkemoni* 1 (1909/1910), 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. Jawitz here takes a similar approach to Krochmal, who argues that “all is in order for us to arrive through investigative ability [i.e., historical study] at clear convictions and finally at a clarification in which we perceive ourselves and our identity, this being the common soul of Israel, and how it manifests in the world through our history and affairs in the form of the revolutions and reversals of time until this day, and from this we may draw inferences regarding the future”; Krochmal, כתבי נחמן קרוכמל, 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Herschberg, “תולדות רבי זאב יעבץ,” 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. Lilienblum, “ראשית תולדות ישראל – ביקורת,” *Hashilo’ach* 1 (1896/1897), 167–77, 364–71. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. Herschberg, “תולדות רבי זאב יעבץ,” 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. Klausner, “זאב יעבץ,” *Hashilo’ach* 21 (1909), 382. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. Chaim Mikhel Michlin, “מכתבים מאה"ק,” *Hamaggid*, January 1, 1891, 3; idem, “אה"ק,” *Hamaggid*, July 16, 1891, 6; Israel Teller, “למוד התורה,” *Hamaggid*, October 24, 1895, 2; Michlin, “מכתבי סופרים,” *Hatzefirah*, July 15, 1891, 2; Ish Yehudi Sifra, “שיחה בעולם הספרות,” *Haztefirah*, March 23, 1892, 3; idem, “שיחה בעולם הספרות,” *Haztefirah*, May 4, 1892, 2; Selig Slonimski, “קרית ספר,” *Hatzefirah*, June 30, 1892, 3; Hame’ir, “קרית ספר,” *Hatzefirah*, September 11, 1892, 3; idem, “קרית ספר,” *Hatzefirah*, September 12, 1892, 3; idem, “קרית ספר,” *Hatzefirah*, September 14, 1892, 3; idem, “קרית ספר,” *Hatzefirah*, November 7, 1892, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. Nissenbaum, עלי חלדי (Jerusalem, 1968/1969), 96; Dinur, בעולם ששקע (Jerusalem, 1958), 96; Klausner, דרכי לקראת התחיה והגאולה (Tel Aviv, 1945/1946), 38. Books by Jawitz also were popular in the childhood home of Berl Katznelson in the late nineteenth century. See Anita Shapira, ברל (Tel Aviv, 1879/1880), 17, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. Judah Loeb Jawitz to Zeev Jawitz, Elul 22, 5682 [September 15, 1922], NYPL, Jawitz Collection, item 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. Bialik, אגרות חיים נחמן ביאליק (Tel Aviv, 1937/1938), 1:168. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. Idem, “רעיון הישוב,” *Hamelitz* 32 (April 5, 1892), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. Gintzburg, “עזרת סופרים,” *Hamelitz* 34 (II Adar 25, 5654 [April 2, 1894]), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. “בקורת לספרי יעבץ,” *Der Hausfreund 3* (Warsaw, 1893/1894); Edward Natan Frenk, “אגרת בקרת,” *Hatzefira*, March 1, 1894, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. Jawitz, “עזרת סופרים – שני מכתבים,” *Hamelitz* 34 (Iyyar 28, 5654 [June 3, 1894]), 1–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. Ginsberg, מכתבים בענייני ארץ-ישראל 1891–1926 (Jerusalem, 2000), 90; Goldstein, אחד העם, 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. Yode’a Va’ed, “עזרת סופרים – יעבץ ומחנה ‘אויביו’,” *Hamelitz* 34 (Tammuz 7, 5654 [July 11, 1894]), 1–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. Jawitz to Davidson, Marcheshvan 15, 5655 [November 14, 1894], NYPL, Jawitz Collection, item 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. Ginsberg, אגרות אחד העם (Tel Aviv, 1923/1924), 1:34–35. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. Jawitz to Achad Ha’am, Tevet 10, 5652 [January 10, 1892], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Achad Ha’am Collection, 791 Arc 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. Jawitz to Achad Ha’am, Tishri 4, 5652 [October 6, 1891], ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. Salmon, דת וציונות, 184–91; Zipperstein, נביא חמקמק, 115–19; Lang, דבר עברית, 301–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. Dov Lebowitz of Gederah to Jawitz, Elul 17, 5655 [September 6, 1895], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection, 1791 Arc 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. Ginsberg, כל כתבי אחד העם, 51–54. See also Goldstein, אחד העם, 178–80. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. Zipperstein, נביא חמקמק, 108–12; Schweid, תולדות פילוסופית הדת היהודית, 190–204. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. In the words of Pines in an 1895 letter to Achad Ha’am: “But the nationalism that I desire is the nationalism of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi and Nahmanides, of blessed memory: a nationalism infused with religion, while that religion is infused with it, a nationalism whose soul is the Torah and whose vitality is the commandments.” Pines, “מכתב גלוי לאחד העם,” *Hachavatzelet* 26 (Tevet 22, 5655 [January 18, 1895]), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. Gideon Shimoni, האידיאולוגיה הציונית (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2000/2001), 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. Herzl, עניין היהודים: ספרי יומן (Jerusalem, 1997), 1:399, 623. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. Zeev Jawitz to Golda Jawitz, Elul 5657 [August/September 1897], NYPL, Jawitz Collection, item 93. Concerning the conflict between Herzl and Achad Ha’am, see Yossi Goldstein, אחד העם והרצל: המאבק על אופייה הפוליטי והתרבותי של הציונות בצל פרשת אלטנוילנד (Jerusalem, 2011), 11–27. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. Jawitz, “לא בחפזון תצאו,” *Hatzefirah* 26 (Shevat 27, 5659 [February 7, 1899]), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
116. Jawitz, “המעלות והמגרעות,” *Hatzefirah* 26 (Nisan 11, 5659 [March 22, 1899]), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
117. Bat-Yehudah, יודע העתים, 55–56. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
118. Ibid., 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
119. Luz, מקבילים נפגשים, 203–34; Goldstein, אחד העם, 282–96; Zipperstein, נביא חמקמק, 141–218; [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
120. Concerning, Reines, see Geulah Bat-Yehudah, איש המאורות: רבי יצחק יעקב ריינס (Jerusalem, Mosad Harav Kook, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
121. Concerning the Mizrachi, see Judah Leib Maimon, ספר המזרחי (Jerusalem, 1946); Shlomo Zalman Shragai and Yitzhak Raphael, ספר הציונות הדתית, 2 vol. (Jerusalem, 1977); Luz, מקבילים נפגשים, 309–16; Geulah Bat-Yehudah, “שאלת 'הקולטורה' והמזרחי,” Shragai (1981/1982), 1:66–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
122. Luz, מקבילים נפגשים, 306. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
123. Ehud Luz sees in this declaration a retreat from the position espoused by the Orthodox in the 1880s that they were the guardians of the spiritual affairs of the Zionist movement. He attributes the change to recognition that the Zionist public had undergone a transition with the change of the century. Luz, מקבילים נפגשים, 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
124. Jawitz, “אגרות ר' זאב יעבץ ז"ל אל הראי"ה קוק זצ"ל,” *Sinai* 29 (5711 [1950/1951]), 109–10. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
125. M. Ch., “אסיפת המזרחי בפרשבורג,” *Hatzefirah* 31 (Elul 15, 5664 [August 26, 1904]), 4; Luz, מקבילים נפגשים, 330–31; Maimon, “יעבץ המזרחי,” *Hator* 4, no. 20–21 (Adar 5684 [February/March 1924], 19–20; Bat-Yehudah, יודע העתים, 60–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
126. Maimon, ספר המזרחי, 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
127. Jawitz, אגרות ר' זאב יעבץ, 110–11. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
128. Concerning the plan, see Avneri, “דגל ירושלים,” in *In the Paths of Renewal: Studies in Religious Zionism 3* (1989): 39–58. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
129. Kook, אגרות ראי"ה (Jerusalem, 5725 [1964/1965]), 3:148. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
130. Kook to Jawitz, Nisan 6, 5678 [March 19, 1918], in Kook, אגרות ראי"ה, 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
131. The manifesto appears in *Sinai* 29 (5711 [1950/1951]): 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
132. Kook to Jawitz, Nisan 11, 5678 [March 24, 1918], in Kook, אגרות ראי"ה, 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
133. Receipt dated Tammuz 3, 5678 [June 13, 1918], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
134. Concerning Schonfeld, see: Yitzhak Raphael, אנציקלופדיה של הציונות הדתית (Jerusalem, 5743 [1982/1983]), 5:771–72. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
135. Schonfeld to Jawitz, Tevet 10, 5679 [December 13, 1918], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
136. Struck to Jawitz, June 26, 1920, Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
137. Jawitz to Kook, Adar 26, 5680 [March 16, 1920], in Jawitz, op. cit. (n. 123), 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
138. Jawitz, “המזרחי ושאיפותיו,” *Hator* 2, no. 21–22 (Adar 5682 [March 1922]): 31–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
139. Eliezer Schweid, “ביאליק ומדע היהדות,” *Jewish Studies* 35 (1995): 60–68; Israel Bartal, “מפעל הכינוס: מדעי היהדות ועיצוב 'תרבות לאומית' בארץ ישראל,” in וזאת ליהודה: מחקרים בתולדות ארץ ישראל ויישובה מוגשים ליהודה בן פורת, ed. Elchanan Reiner and Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (Jerusalem, 2003), 520–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
140. Bialik, “הספר העברי,” in כל כתבי ח"נ ביאליק (Tel Aviv, 5720 [1959/1960]), 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
141. Bar-Ilan (Berlin), מוולוז'ין עד ירושלים (Tel Aviv, 1971), 395. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
142. Rawnitzki to Jawitz, Tevet 14, 5683 [January 2, 1923], Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
143. See n. 94 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
144. Bialik, אגרות חיים נחמן ביאליק (Tel Aviv, 5698 [1937/1938]), 5:162. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
145. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
146. Elkoshi, אגרות, 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
147. Mauricio Meyers to Jawitz, May 26, 1921, Archive of the National Library of Israel, Jawitz Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
148. Jawitz, “על תרבותנו הישראלית,” *Do’ar Hayom* 3, Sivan 17, 5681 [June 23, 1921], 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
149. Feiner, “ביקורת המודרניות: שמואל דוד לוצאטו וההשכלה שכנגד,” in שמואל דוד לוצאטו: מאתיים שנה להולדתו, ed. Robert Bonfil, Isaac Gotlieb, and Hannah Kasher (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2004), 134–42. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
150. Berlin, נגד הזרם (Tel Aviv, 1986), 57–84. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
151. Luzzatto, op. cit. (n. 82). [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
152. Arielle Rein argues that historian Ben Zion Dinur was far more influenced by Jawitz than he was prepared to admit, especially in his conception of the inner unity of Jewish history and its bifurcation between periods when the nation lived in the Land of Israel and all other times; see Rein, “Historian,” 58, 246. The influence of Jawitz’s ideas is felt in the first article published by Rabbi Zwi Yehuda Kook, as well as in the classes that Rabbi Kook taught through the years, as expressed in “האחדות” and other articles he authored; see Kook, “התרבות הישראלית,” in לנתיבות ישראל (Jerusalem, 5727 [1966/1967]), 5–11. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)